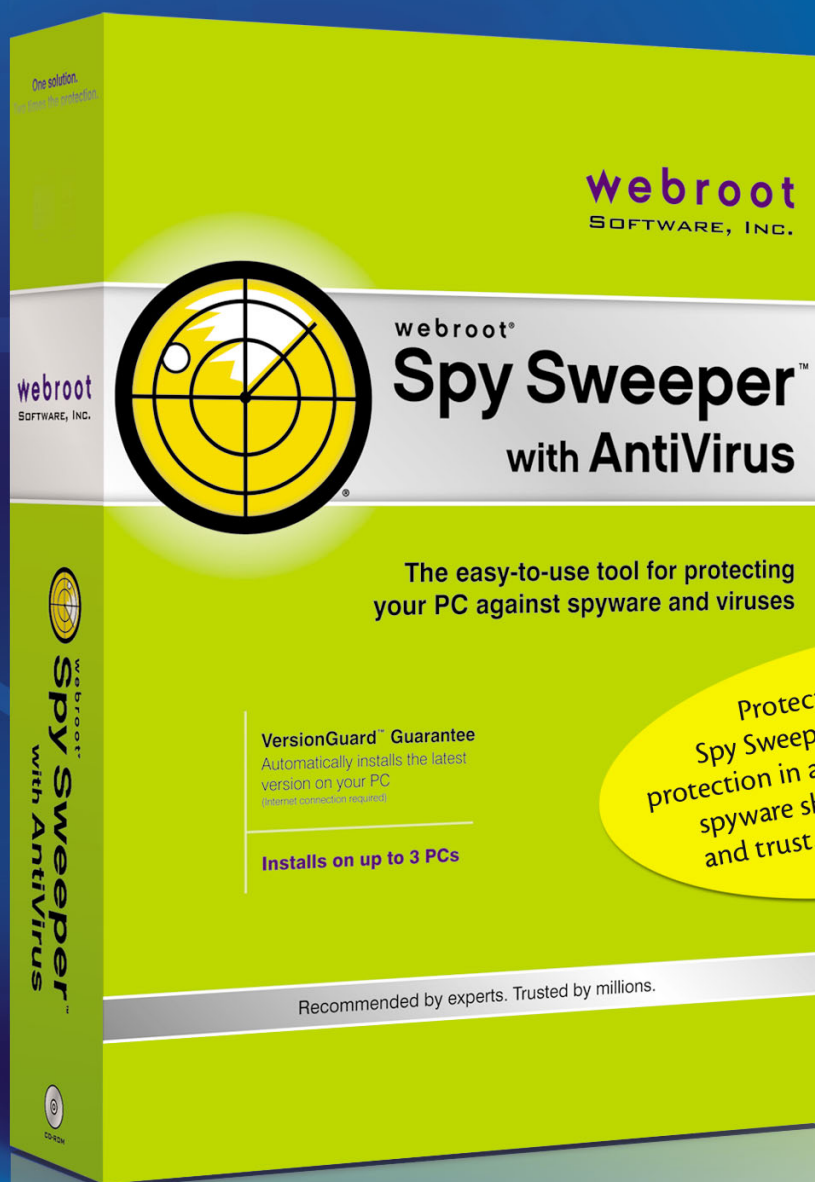


# FirstGlimpse™

FirstGlimpseMag.com

## Keep Your Home PC Safe



Protect your entire system!  
Spy Sweeper now features antivirus  
protection in addition to the award-winning  
spyware shield you've come to know  
and trust. Find out more on page 13!

## We Compare The Hottest: HDTVs • Digital Cameras • Laptops





Providing true multi-channel surround sound from a single unit, the Digital Sound Projector™ is nothing short of a stylistic revolution in home theater design. No speakers, no cables, just one elegant unit on a rack or mounted on a wall. Surround sound has never been this easy.



## YSP-1100SL Digital Sound Projector

**All-in-one multi-channel sound component — truly unique!**  
An ideal match for 42" flat TVs and monitors. True surround sound.

- Sensational multi-channel sound from DVDs, other digital sources and even TV
- Digital amplifier built-in
- Large range of optimum listening positions thanks to a wider soundstage
- 7 CINEMA DSP programs
- Two Volume Mode with Night Listening Enhancer and TV Volume Equal mode
- Dolby Digital, DTS, Dolby Pro Logic II and DTS Neo:6 compatibility
- TruBass for more dynamic bass sound
- Elegant, space-saving design
- No need for numerous speakers and cables
- Slim profile matching for 42" flat TVs and monitors
- Can be wall mounted or placed in a shelf or rack
- Design is more elegant, less obtrusive than multiple speaker boxes



# A brand new style of *home theater.*



## YSP-800SL Digital Sound Projector

Multi-channel surround sound enjoyment from a single compact component! — the best match for 32" flat TVs and monitors.

### True surround sound

- Capable of delivering true multi-channel sound
- Large range of optimum listening positions thanks to a wider soundstage
- 3 CINEMADSP programs • Dolby Digital, DTS, Dolby Pro Logic II and DTS Neo:6 compatibility

- Two Volume Mode with Night Listening Enhancer and TV Volume Equal mode
- TruBass for more dynamic bass sound

### Elegant, space-saving design

- Compact and slim profile matching for 32" flat TVs and monitors

- Can be wall mounted or placed in a shelf or rack
- Design is more elegant, less obtrusive than multiple speaker boxes



# YAMAHA

## Cover Story

- 13 Sweep It Clean:** Spy Sweeper With Antivirus Is The Ally You Need

### On Our Cover:

Featured on our cover this month is Webroot's Spy Sweeper With Antivirus (\$39.95).

## Open

There's always something new and interesting happening in the world of consumer electronics. You'll hear about it all in *First Glimpse's* Open section.

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## Home Theater

Everyone wants a sleek, stylish HDTV to accent his or her home, but many folks just don't know where to start when it comes to actually buying one. Whether you're looking for a quick glossary of terms, shopping tips, or must-have accessories, check out Home Theater for quick tips on making your high-def experience the best it can be.

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## Wireless

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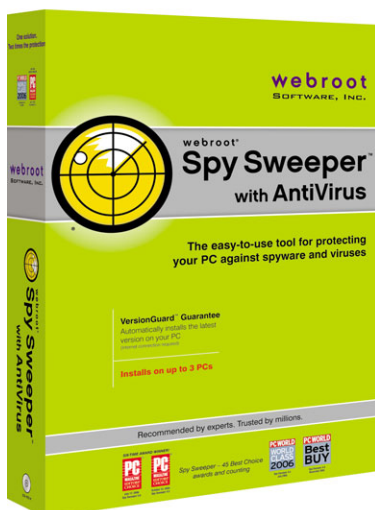




## First Glimpse Special Product Section

This special product section is produced in partnership with leading consumer electronics manufacturers and allows us to provide readers with the most timely product information possible. Browse through these First Glimpse pages to learn about the latest hot products.

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## Yamaha 650W 5.1-Ch. XM-Ready Home Theater System (YHT-270)

MSRP: \$299.99

[www.yamaha.com](http://www.yamaha.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and  
[www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Powerful 5.1-Channel Surround Sound

Yamaha's 650-watt home-theater system features built-in digital surround-sound decoders to deliver the highest levels of sound performance directly to your family room.

The YHT-270 HTB (Home Theater in a Box) includes a 5.1-channel amplifier, two front speakers, a center-channel speaker, two surround speakers and a powered subwoofer. It's also XM-Ready, allowing you to enjoy XM Satellite Radio with the addition of the XM Connect and Play digital antenna accessory (sold separately).

### Additional Features Include:

- 5.1-channel sound: Experience thrilling 5.1-channel surround sound
- MP3 playback: Enjoy your collections of MP3-format music recorded to CD
- Expanded bass response: Powerful subwoofer delivers rich bass response
- Silent cinema: Enjoy private listening of 5.1-channel surround sound with ordinary headphones





# FirstGlimpse™

Special Product Section

**Westinghouse SK-42H240S (Available April 2007)**

MSRP: \$1,299

[www.westinghousedigital.com](http://www.westinghousedigital.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Improve Your Digital Entertainment Experience with the new Westinghouse 42" LCD HDTV

The perfect display solutions for consumers who want HD quality resolution, wide-ranging connectivity, and advanced features at an affordable price.

This TV features Westinghouse's proprietary technologies such as SpineDesign™ intelligent cable access, DayBright™ panel technology for stunning daytime or nighttime viewing and Autosource™ technology, intelligent engineering that allows the TV to automatically switch to the external source that is activated.

- 1366x768 High resolution HDTV with ATSC/NTSC/ClearQAM tuner

- Supports all TV formats (1080i, 720p, 480p, 480i)
- Multiple HD input connectors including 2 HDMI™
- Contrast Ratio 5000:1- Dynamic
- Preset and custom video modes for exceptional viewing experience



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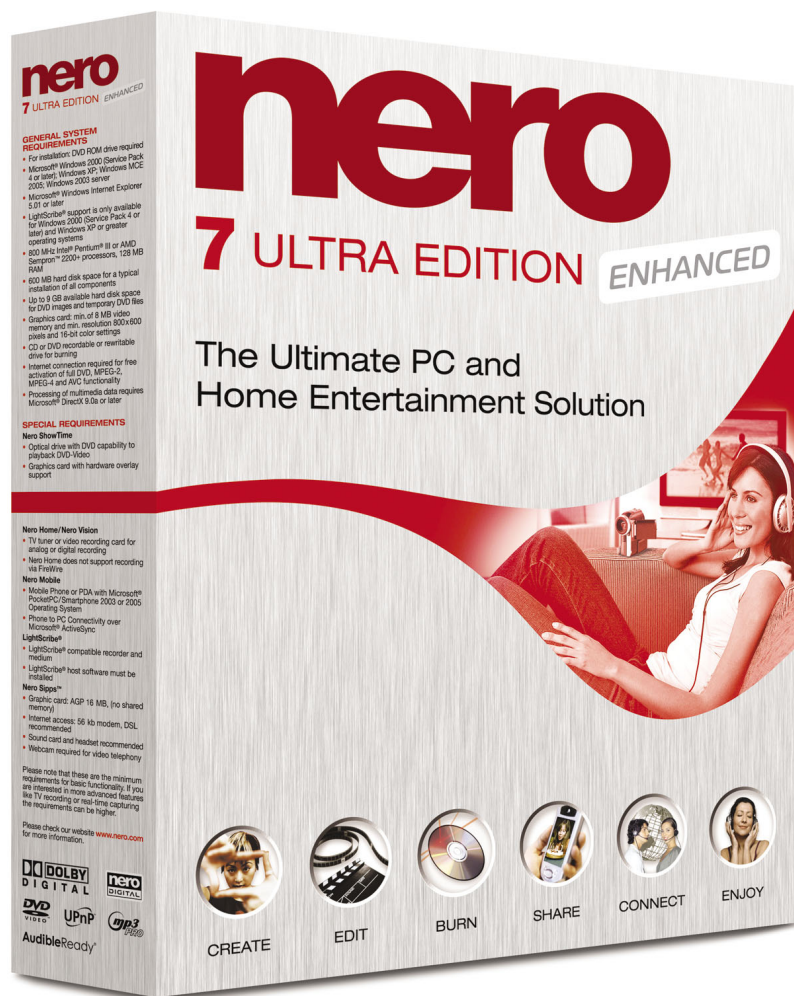
Special Product Section

## Nero 7 Ultra Edition Enhanced

MSRP: \$99.99

[www.nero.com](http://www.nero.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## The Ultimate PC & Home Entertainment Solution

Nero 7 Ultra Edition Enhanced provides you with over 20 applications in one solution to complete all your digital media tasks on your PC and on your TV. The Enhanced version now includes exciting new features to access your media files throughout your connected digital home, share files with family and friends, or take them with you on the go.

### New features include:

- Windows Vista Ready lets you enjoy Nero's software applications with improved graphics and the streamlined features made possible with the Microsoft Vista operating system
- Nero Mobile transforms your mobile phone into a mobile media center
- Capture and edit HD video
- Watch and record live TV
- Copy to disk with just one click using the new Nero DiscCopy Gadget
- Nero BackItUp now works with Windows Vista to manage your files within your search folder
- Customize your Nero Home interface to work with your favorite internet radio, Web TV and imagecast services
- Enhanced templates for video and slideshow projects plus music timing features help give your multimedia creations new depth and professionalism

# nero

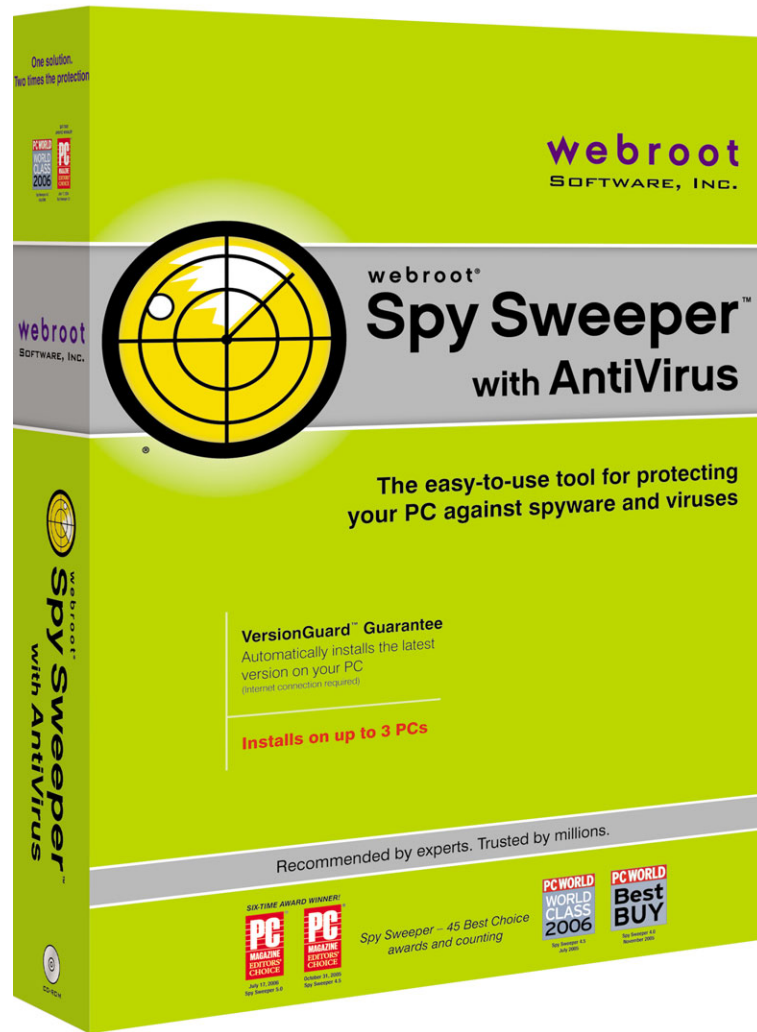


**Webroot® Spy Sweeper™  
with AntiVirus**

MSRP: \$49.95

[www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores  
and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Keep Your PC Spyware- & Virus-Free With One Click

Spy Sweeper™ with AntiVirus software features a powerful combination of award-winning antispware and antivirus technologies. With just one click, Spy Sweeper™ with AntiVirus software quickly scans your PC and removes any harmful spyware, viruses, Trojans, worms, and rootkits. Plus its Smart Shields are always active and standing guard to keep your system safe from outside threats.

**Spy Sweeper™ with AntiVirus is simple to set up and customize and makes your computing life easier with:**

- Complete spyware and virus protection in one tool
- Free automatic program and definition updates for one year so your protection is always up-to-date

- Free customer support via phone or email for one year so you can speak with an expert when you need help
- Spy Sweeper™ with AntiVirus is armed with Webroot's Comprehensive Removal Technology, which scours deeply to destroy the most stubborn and malicious spyware and viruses. It is also backed by Webroot's threat research system, which searches the Internet 24 hours a day, seven days a week for new strains of malware.

**webroot**  
SOFTWARE, INC.

## APC Back-UPS XS 1500VA Battery Back-Up System

MSRP: \$199.99

[www.apc.com](http://www.apc.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Protect Your PC's Data This Storm Season

Spring is here, and for most of us, that means thunderstorms and the threat of power outages. Protect your PC with APC's Back-UPS XS 1500VA Battery Back-Up System. A UPS (uninterruptible power supply) protects your system from brief voltage surges, voltage decreases, and power failure, among other things, by keeping your PC up and running. This model from APC features an eight-outlet battery backup system with a built-in LCD for easy monitoring of your system's power.

### Other features include:

- 1,500VA capacity
- AVR (Automatic Voltage Regulation) technology, which corrects undervoltage
- PowerChute shutdown software
- APC's \$150,000 lifetime equipment protection policy

**APC®**  
Legendary Reliability®



# FirstGlimpse™

Special Product Section

## Magellan RoadMate 6000T North America

MSRP: \$599.99

[www.magellangps.com](http://www.magellangps.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Advanced, Easy-To-Use Vehicle Navigation

Avoid traffic delays and make calls hands free. The RoadMate 6000T's integrated receiver feeds live incident reports, and its Bluetooth wireless technology and built-in microphone let you make hands-free calls with your Bluetooth-enabled phone. Advanced turn-by-turn GPS guidance directs you around traffic.

Simple touch-screen menus let you enter an address or select from over 6 million points of interest, which include nearby gas stations, restaurants, historical monuments, shopping centers, and more. Just touch an icon to see detailed information, including phone numbers, and get an instant route.

### Other features include:

- Live traffic reports (requires service subscription after 3 month introductory period)
- Music player; picture viewer
- Hands-free calls with your Bluetooth phone



## Audiovox Xpress Satellite Radio Receiver With Vehicle Kit (XMCK10A)

MSRP: \$81.99

[www.audiovox.com](http://www.audiovox.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Take Your Radio Wherever You Go

Listen to your favorite music without commercial interruption and hear the latest sports scores, breaking news, and entertaining talk radio with the Audiovox Xpress Satellite Radio Receiver with Vehicle Kit.

The innovative, compact design allows for plug-and-play installation in any vehicle, and delivers great sound, too.

A large, 5-line LCD offers programmable scrolling for stock prices and sports scores. This unit also features TuneSelect, which allows you to store up to 20 artists or songs that you like most. It also lets you know when they are playing on any XM channel.

### Other features include:

- Simple encoder knob
- Jump function

- Auto on, auto off, and sleep timer
- Auxiliary input
- Adhesive car mount, car dock, antenna, and DC power adaptor remote



**AUDIOVOX**  
CORPORATION



# FirstGlimpse™

Special Product Section

## Belkin TuneFM for iPod

MSRP: \$49.99

[www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)

Available at select Best Buy™ stores and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)



## Your iPod Goes Where You Go

TuneFM for iPod wirelessly connects your iPod to your car, home, or portable stereo, quickly and easily. Just plug the TuneFM into the dock connector on your iPod, tune your stereo to any clear FM frequency, and enjoy your iPod music anywhere, with full sound and fewer wires. Compatible with: iPod nano, 5G, 4G (color display), 4G, and mini.

### Other features include:

- iPod display for quick and easy FM tuning
- Best-in-class audio performance

- Four single-touch, programmable preset buttons
- Auto power cord to power and charge your iPod in the car

# BELKIN®

# Sweep It Clean

## Spy Sweeper With Antivirus Is The Ally You Need



Ask any computer guru about the best antispymware or antivirus utilities for Windows, and chances are that Webroot Spy Sweeper with Antivirus ([www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)) will be at or near the top of his list.

Webroot may not have as much name recognition among “mom and pop” computer users as other software, but it should. Spy Sweeper has become a favorite of many knowledgeable users for its powerful protection.

Spy Sweeper with Antivirus works with Windows 2000/XP, and Webroot provides a free update to ensure compatibility with Windows Vista (you can find details at [www.webroot.com/land/Windows-Vista-Ready.php](http://www.webroot.com/land/Windows-Vista-Ready.php)). The software costs \$39.95 for a one-year subscription or \$49.95 for up to three computers. Existing Spy Sweeper users can renew their subscriptions for a \$29.95 upgrade. Do some comparison shopping, and you’ll quickly find that this is a great value for both forms of protection.

### Sneaking Suspicions

Spyware and adware seemed almost innocuous several years ago. Ads would pop up on your screen. Your browser home page would change to some site that was selling something. A new toolbar would appear at the top of Internet Explorer. You knew you hadn’t installed any new programs, but nevertheless, these annoying programs had

installed themselves on your computer without your consent.

And that was the trouble. If vulnerabilities in Windows and browsers such as Internet Explorer could let unwanted applications install themselves to spy on your Web usage or show you endless ads, it didn’t take an evil genius to figure out that those security holes could let much worse malware through, too. Identity theft, unauthorized financial account access, and other hazards started to spread. Spyware and viruses became a real danger—and much harder to detect and remove.

Spy Sweeper earns high ratings as one of the best of the antispymware breed. Unlike many competitors, it finds and eliminates rootkits, which can hide other malware deeper than many security programs can look. It also detects and deletes trojans, keyloggers, and system monitors, as well as garden varieties of spyware and adware. Because many of the blended threats combine more than one category of malware, there’s some overlap in coverage between Spy Sweeper and traditional antivirus software.

Because new malware (as well as variations on existing themes) emerges just about every day, Webroot updates Spy Sweeper frequently. The company’s spyware research department uses an automated tool called Phileas. Just like a search engine looking for new and updated Web pages, Phileas scours the Internet looking for new and modified versions of malware.

## A Clean Sweep

As for scanning, you can choose among three different Sweep options: Quick Sweep, Full Sweep, and Custom Sweep. You can tell it to run a Full Scan of every file and folder on your PC and attached drives or a time-saving Quick Sweep that just looks in the areas of your PC’s hard drive and memory that are likely targets for viruses and malware. (If a Smart Scan detects any trouble, Webroot recommends that you then run a Full Sweep to give Spy Sweeper a complete picture of the possible infection.)

You can also run a scan with the settings you prefer with the Custom Sweep. For example, if you want Spy Sweeper with Antivirus to run a Smart Scan but also check for rootkits at the same time, you’ll be able to check the appropriate settings box. ●

## You Can’t Lose

Not every piece of software comes with a money-back guarantee or free phone tech support, but Spy Sweeper With Antivirus does. If you have trouble with the utility, you can use Webroot’s online resources or give its tech support center a toll-free call. For example, some users have reported that version 5.2 may interfere with Windows XP’s shut-down procedure unless they disable Spy Sweeper’s Keylogger Shield or SPS (self-protection shield).

If you really don’t like Spy Sweeper within the first 30 days, you can get a refund. From what we’ve seen of this antivirus and antispymware wonder, however, we doubt that many new users will want their money back. ●



Webroot says that it can and has updated Spy Sweeper's antispysware definitions hourly when necessary. In typical usage, however, we've seen new updates every one to three days. Spy Sweeper updates itself automatically by default, but you can tell it to check for new definitions at any time to make sure that it has the latest ones.

## What About Viruses?

Antispyware programs came about because antivirus utilities just weren't designed to deal with malicious adware, spyware, and similar kinds of threats. Today the two categories of security software are gradually merging together (although you can still choose to use individual antispyware and antivirus apps you like best), and Spy Sweeper With Antivirus combines them into one powerful tool.

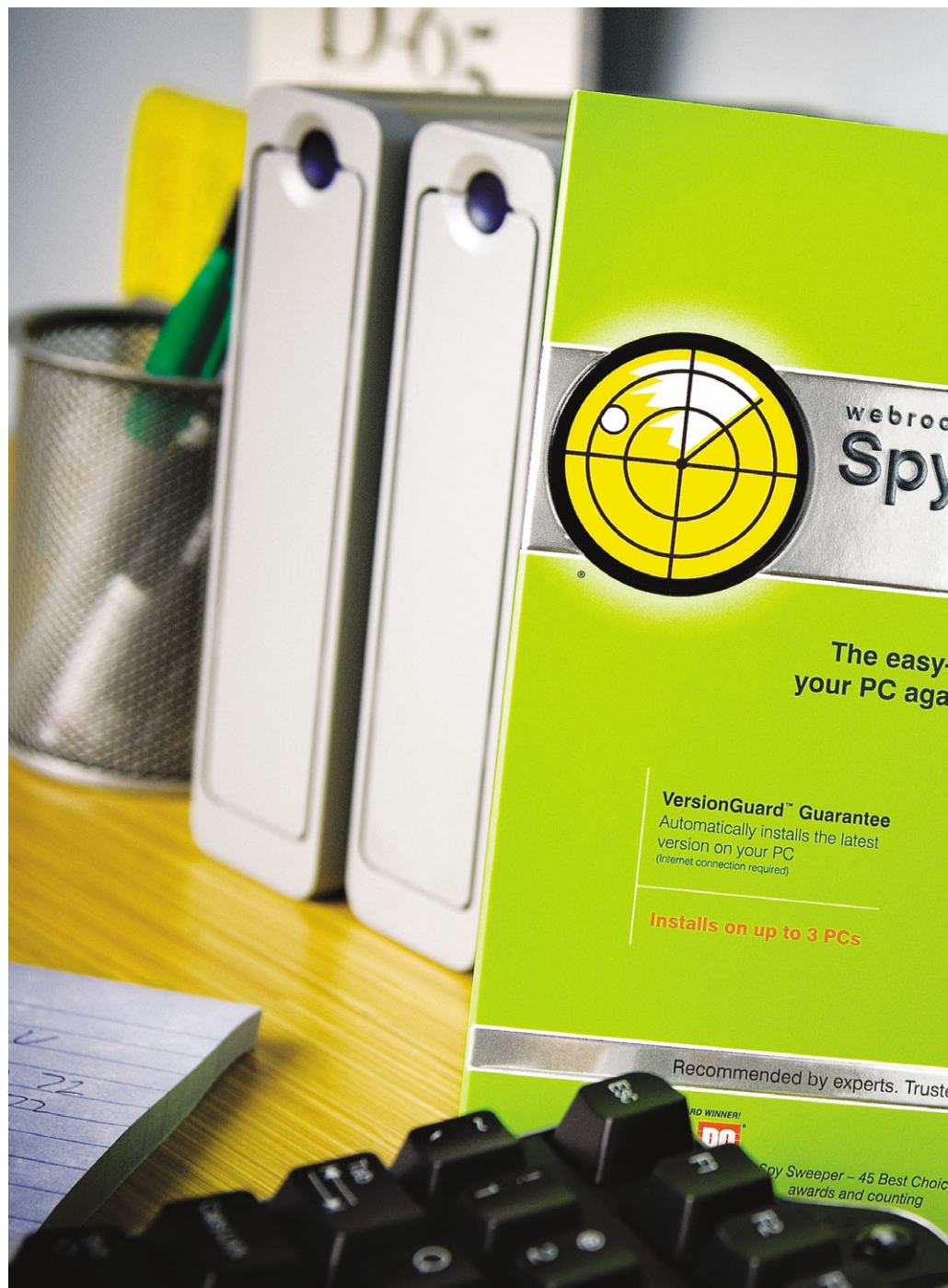
Webroot uses antivirus technology from longtime security vendor Sophos ([www.sophos.com](http://www.sophos.com)) to guard against viruses and worms. Sophos earned a 100% effectiveness rating in the December 2006 antivirus software test conducted by Virus Bulletin ([www.virusbtn.com](http://www.virusbtn.com)).

## Shields Up

Because some threats are so difficult to remove from your PC once they've installed themselves, you shouldn't even consider using antispyware without a resident, full-time protection component. In order to be effective these days, anti-malware software also has to keep an eye out for threats such as CoolWebSearch and rootkits and prevent them from gaining a foothold on your computer. It's no longer enough for you to simply run a scan once a week; your computer's protection has to be running constantly in the background whenever your computer is turned on, which means your antispyware should start up at the same time Windows does.

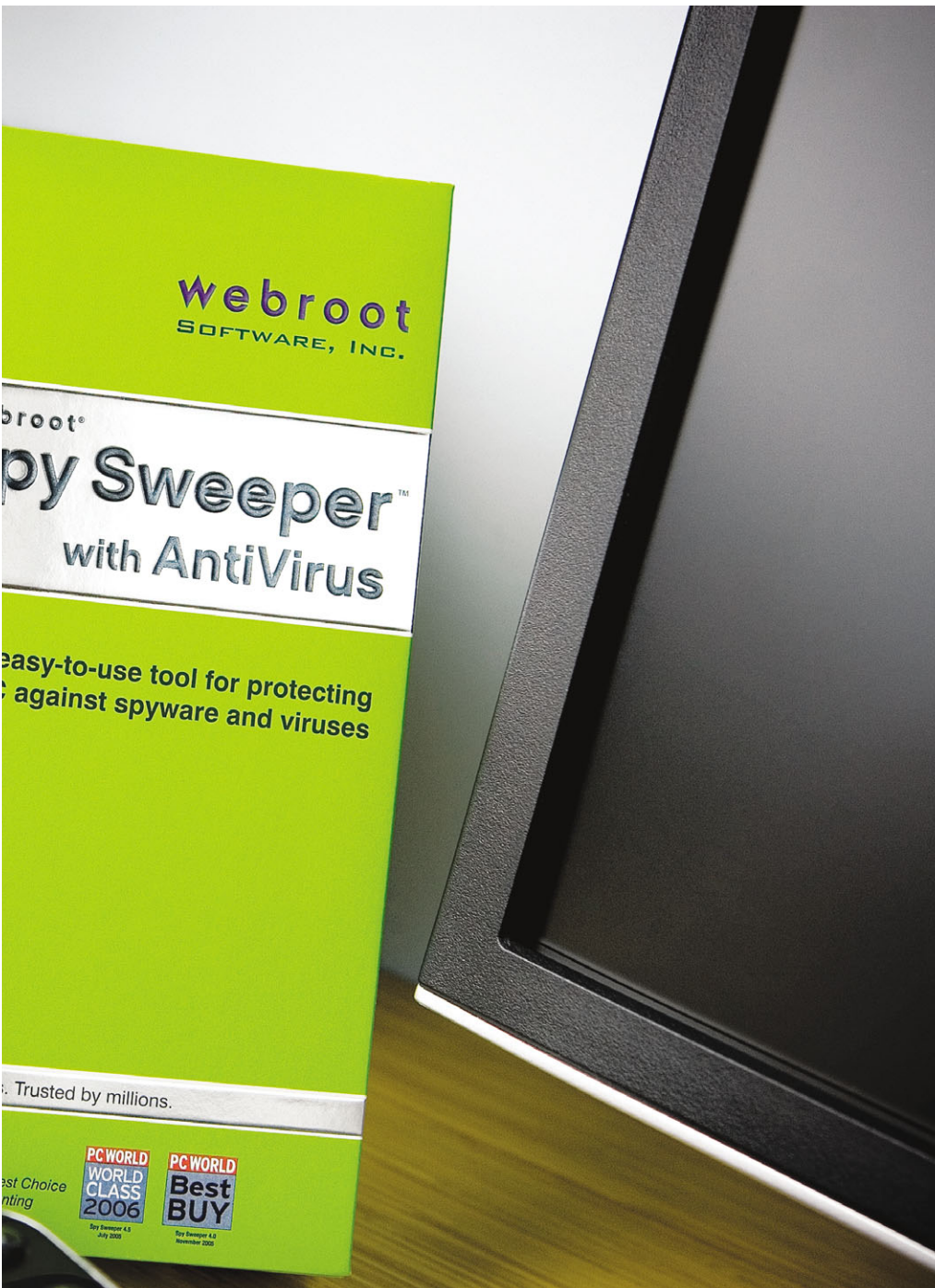
Spy Sweeper is outstanding in this regard. It has automatic Smart Shields that guard against unauthorized activity in up to 16 different areas (you can disable any of these if you need to). There's even a shield that alerts you whenever an application you're installing, such as

Adobe Reader, wants to add an entry to Windows' Startup list. You'll be able to allow or deny the change. We love the Startup list shield because it lets us reduce the number of gratuitous programs that run in the background and slow down our system.



Like a good antivirus program, Spy Sweeper watches for suspicious types of software behavior, such as when an unknown application tries to install itself or access a particular area of memory. Using a combination of known spyware definitions and algorithms to detect

new kinds of malware based on what they try to do, Spy Sweeper does a tremendous job at preventing bad software from ruining your day. **FG**



## The Case Against Freebies

Of course, there are free antispware alternatives available on the Internet. Spybot Search & Destroy ([www.spybot.info](http://www.spybot.info)) offers decent coverage when you enable its SDHelper and TeaTimer full-time protection options, but it can't detect rootkits. Also, we've found that Spybot sometimes cannot remove items that it finds.

Even more serious is the fact that Ad-Aware SE Personal ([www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com)) doesn't include Lavasoft's Ad-Watch component. This lack of a full-time protection feature relegates the free version of Ad-Aware to the role of a utility you turn to for a second opinion, not a primary antispware application.

Microsoft also gets into the antispware game with the free (at least for now) Windows Defender. Like the firewalls built into Windows XP/Vista, Defender provides moderate protection with modest configurability. Somewhat defensively, Webroot did its own testing for detection of 15 "common" malware variations, and it said that Windows Defender failed to detect 84% of the threats. We have seen evidence of Spy Sweeper's superiority over Defender firsthand. Just a couple of months before this writing, Defender alerted us to a malware infection that had taken place on its watch. It could detect the spyware that had slipped past its defenses, but it couldn't remove it. We installed Spy Sweeper, and it found and deleted the threat.

The happy news is that, unlike antivirus programs, antispware utilities can generally coexist on a computer without interfering with each other. You should be able to use Spy Sweeper as your primary antispware utility in addition to a free app, such as Spybot, as a backup measure. ●



# ce news

COMPILED BY RACHEL DEROWITSCH



## iPod shuffle Blooms In Four New Colors

The little silver iPod shuffle (\$79; [www.ipod.com](http://www.ipod.com)) is blooming in four bright, new colors this spring—pink, blue, orange, and green. Like the original silver edition, which is still

available, the colorful shuffles have 1GB of flash memory and can store about 240 songs. The shuffle also runs for about 12 hours before requiring a recharge.

But perhaps best for fashion-conscious kids who want to show off a colored iPod, each version of the shuffle has a built-in clip for easy attachment to apparel, backpacks, duffel bags, and more.

## HDTV Sets Not Just For The Living Room Anymore

HDTVs are migrating out of the living room and settling in other rooms in American homes. A report from The Diffusion Group ([www.tdgresearch.com](http://www.tdgresearch.com)) finds that 40% of the almost 40 million HDTVs in households with broadband are situated in rooms other than the primary living or family room. Other favorite places for these TVs are the den or game room (in 16% of homes) and the master bedroom (13%).

In addition, the report says that more consumers are buying a second or even third HDTV. Michael Greeson, a principal analyst with The Diffusion Group, attributes this to both recent price declines and expanded awareness of the benefits of high-definition TVs.

Still, Greeson says that multiple-HDTV homes are more “country club” than “cul-de-sac,” suggesting that the potentially lucrative market of homes with multiple, networked HD sets is still very small.





## Younger Consumers View Cell Phone As Multidimensional Device

Across the board, consumers aged 34 and younger place a higher value on the nonvoice functions of a cell phone than do consumers aged 35 and older. 58% of the Cellular Generation (aged 18 to 25) who were surveyed by comScore Networks ([www.comscore.com](http://www.comscore.com)) said that text messaging is of "high importance" when selecting a cell phone, compared to 46% of the Transitioners (aged 25 to 34) and just 30% of Adult Adopters (aged 35 and above).

comScore Networks surveyed more than 1,700 cell phone owners who also use the Internet. Of the nonvoice features considered when selecting a phone, an MP3 player was the least likely to be considered of high importance by all the age groups surveyed.

Serge Matta, senior vice president of comScore Telecommunications Solutions, said, "While the youngest consumers grew up with the technology, those just a few years older did not, resulting in some pronounced differences in attitudes and behaviors toward cell phone usage across the various segments."

Important Cell Phone Features			
Feature/Quality (Of High Importance)	Aged 18 to 25	Aged 25 to 34	Aged 35+
Text Messaging*	58%	46%	30%
Camera	42%	37%	30%
Trendiness	26%	25%	10%
MP3 Player	20%	19%	8%

\*Respondents could pick more than one feature

## Kodak Likes Best Buy's Sales-Assisted Floor Model

Kodak's new All-In-One EasyShare color printers will be available for a limited time exclusively at Best Buy because Kodak says it likes the idea that consumers will find knowledgeable sales assistance as they shop. The new 5100 (\$149.99), 5300 (\$199.99), and 5500 (\$299.99) All-In-Ones have printer, scanner, and copier components, and each device features two paper trays: One holds 8.5- x 11-inch paper, and the other holds 4x6 photo paper. Additionally, the 5300 has a 3-inch LCD and memory-card slots so you can print sans PC. The 5500 incorporates all of those features and has a fax component, an automatic document feeder, and duplexing abilities.



And in a groundbreaking move, Kodak has dramatically reduced the prices on replacement ink cartridges for the new All-In-One EasyShare printers. Consumers will be able to pick up a replacement black ink cartridge for \$9.99 and a 5-color ink cartridge for \$14.99.

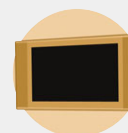
## tidbits



About 55% of Americans say they would be more likely to **buy an HDTV** set if they knew it could be professionally installed.

Source: Best Buy Omnitel Survey

**Sales of digital TV sets** in 2006 accounted for more than \$20.5 billion, up over 30% from the previous year.



Source: Consumer Electronics Association

3.8 million U.S. households adopted **VoIP technology** in 2006.



Source: In-Stat

Samsung sold more digital TVs in the United States last year than any other manufacturer, capturing **20% of the market**, but Sony sold the most large-screen (32-inch and above) digital sets.



Source: NPD



The North American Photo Merchandise market, which includes items such as **photo calendars, photo greeting cards, and photo mugs**, will account for more than \$800 million in sales by 2010.

Source: InfoTrends

# Home Theater Shopping Tips

BY MARTY SEMS

## Buying A Home Theater In A Box

**U**nless you're passionately knowledgeable about particular surround-sound components, or are lucky enough to find a sales associate who is, you'd probably rather buy a complete home-theater speaker set than try to piece one together yourself. Tear this page out to take with you as you shop.

Ideally, you'd find the perfect HTB (home theater in a box) online and then go to an electronics store to listen to that model before you buy it. This scenario rarely happens in the real world, of course; stores simply don't stock every model on the market. Sound quality is an important factor in choosing an HTB, so you don't want to buy one over the Internet "sound unheard," so to speak. First, visit several stores in your area and listen to a variety of home-theater sets. Jot down the models and prices of the HTBs you like and then go home and re-search them online. If a set has the features you want and mostly good reviews online, buy it.

You'll get the best audio fidelity through a digital connection, so plan to buy an HTB with inputs for HDMI or S/PDIF (Sony Philips Digital Interface Format) optical or coaxial cables. HDMI is newer and can support a higher-quality signal, and it's expected to become the home-theater audio standard in the next few years. Note that you'll only be able to use the types of audio connections for which your TV, DVD player, and other sources have outputs.

Audio formats may look like jumbles of letters to you, but the more formats your HTB supports, the more movie discs you'll be able to play with their best audio mixes. If you plan to watch BD (Blu-ray Disc) or HD DVD movies with their top sound options enabled, buy an HTB that supports DTS HD, Dolby Digital Plus, and/or Dolby TrueHD. This may mean buying a 7.1-channel (seven speakers and a subwoofer) set, although you can easily get by with a 5.1-channel HTB for virtually any movie.

Subwoofer size matters. In general, the larger the diameter of the subwoofer's speaker, the deeper the bass you'll hear and feel.

Extras that come with your HTB are things you won't need to buy later. Some kits come with wall mounts or stands for the speakers. More importantly, digital input cables in the box can save you big money over buying them later (shop online for the best deals). Don't buy an HTB just because it comes with a DVD player unless that player has all the features you want, such as support for progressive scan and digital audio outputs.

## SHOPPING CHECKLIST

### ☐ How many speakers?

- ☐ subwoofer (2.1-channel and up)
- ☐ front right and left (2.1-channel and up)
- ☐ center channel (5.1-channel and up)
- ☐ side right and left (also called "surround"; 5.1-channel and up)
- ☐ rear center (6.1-channel)
- ☐ rear right and left (7.1-channel)

### ☐ Which formats are supported?

- ☐ Dolby Digital
- ☐ Dolby Digital EX
- ☐ Dolby Digital Plus
- ☐ Dolby TrueHD
- ☐ Dolby Pro Logic II/IIx
- ☐ DTS
- ☐ DTS ES
- ☐ DTS HD

### ☐ Which inputs are included?

- ☐ HDMI (digital)
- ☐ Optical S/PDIF (digital)
- ☐ Coaxial S/PDIF (digital)
- ☐ RCA (analog)

### ☐ What is the subwoofer diameter?

- ☐ 8 inches
- ☐ 10 inches
- ☐ 12 inches

### ☐ What accessories come standard?

- ☐ Cables
- ☐ Remote control
- ☐ Wall mounts
- ☐ Stands

### ☐ Notes

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CUT HERE

# HDTV Shopping Tips

## HDMI Cables

BY GREGORY ANDERSON



HDMI makes high-definition video and audio easier than other connection options. HDMI carries HD-quality video and multichannel audio on a single cable, without any digital-to-analog conversion that can degrade signal quality. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you shop for HDMI cables.

Measure the distance between your device with an HDMI port and the television and then add a few feet to provide some flexibility. HDMI cables provide reliable signal quality up to about 15 feet, but you can go farther with expensive high-end equipment (such as repeaters or amplifiers). Don't go too far, though. Cables that are too long just end up creating tangles and clutter.

Bargain basement no-name brands often use low-quality components and connectors, leading to cables with shorter life spans and greater susceptibility to interference. You don't have to pay top dollar, though. Stick with a reliable brand name (Belkin and Monster are two leaders in the field) but comparison-shop online and at the store to get the best deal.

HDMI's connectors may become loose and slip out of their ports, either through wear and tear or from poorly constructed or damaged connectors (usually on inexpensive, no-name products). Be careful when connecting and disconnecting cables; don't wrench the cable sideways or yank it out. Buy quality products and look closely at the connectors of each cable. Beware of any indication that the metal components of the plugs are loose (try to jiggle them with your fingers if possible) or nonsquare. If so,

grab another package off the shelf or return the unit for a replacement.

The latest HDMI version is 1.3, released in summer 2005. All versions are backward-compatible, so you won't be left out in the cold with previous versions, but newer versions have enhanced support for DVD Audio and Super Audio CD formats, as well as improved color capacity. Make sure your HDMI cables are compatible with your TV's and other devices' versions.

If your TV or A/V receiver has multiple HDMI ports, plan to buy a couple of cables. DVD players that upconvert signals and those that support HD, such as BD (Blu-ray Disc) and HD DVD players, usually have HDMI outputs, as do most HDTV cable and satellite receivers. High-end gaming consoles, such as the PlayStation 3, and PC graphics cards are starting to support HDMI, as well.

DVI (Digital Video Interface) is the digital HD cable standard that preceded HDMI. DVI is compatible with HDMI, although it carries only video signals, not audio. If one device has an HDMI connection and another has DVI, all you need is an HDMI-to-DVI cable to make the connection. Belkin (\$59.99 to \$159.99; [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)) offers such cables in several lengths.

## SHOPPING CHECKLIST

☐ How far from the components to the TV?

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☐ Which version of HDMI does your TV support?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ How many HDMI inputs on the TV?

- ☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3

☐ Which version of HDMI do your components support?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ How many components have HDMI outputs?

- ☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3

☐ Notes

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## Know How

### Tweak Your Bass & Treble

If your home-theater system doesn't produce the thunderous sound effects you want during action movies, or if background sounds overpower normal dialogue, your receiver or stereo may not be properly calibrated. Home-theater systems often sound different at home than in electronics stores because the acoustics of a room play a large part in the way bass (low frequencies) and treble (high frequencies) reach your ears. If you want your home theater to deliver treble with presence and clarity, as well as bass that sounds full and deep, we'll show you how to balance your home theater's sound.

Your home theater's receiver may feature a graphic equalizer with sliders or knobs to tweak individual frequency bands or a digital display that allows you to adjust the treble, bass, and mid-range frequency settings. No matter how you adjust them, the selections increase or decrease the volume in a given range. Adjusting the bass affects the loudness of low frequency sounds (250Hz and below) such as artillery fire or rhythmic bass guitar, and tweaking the treble (6,000Hz and above) will reveal or conceal high frequency sounds such as birds singing or a soundtrack's flutes and cymbals. Midrange frequencies (between 250 to 6,000Hz) allow you influence the intensity of a movie's dialogue, as well as most instrumental music.

Curtains, walls, ceilings, and furniture affect the way individual frequencies bounce around a room, and the variables require unique adjustments to bass and treble. To most accurately calibrate your home theater's sound, you

need a CD or DVD that plays reference tones for specific frequencies and an SPL (sound pressure level) meter to measure the decibels of sound in a specific location. A variety of SPL meters are available online, such as the Aperion

can measure each frequency band and then increase or decrease it to create a flat frequency response—meaning that no frequency sounds louder than another. The users manual for the reference tone disc provides a step-by-step tutorial that guides you through the calibration process.



Sound Level Meter (\$29; [www.aperionaudio.com](http://www.aperionaudio.com)).

Using an SPL meter in conjunction with a CD or DVD such as Avia's Guide To Home Theater (\$49.99; [www.ovationmultimedia.com](http://www.ovationmultimedia.com)) or Rives Audio Test CD 2 (\$21; [www.rivesaudio.com](http://www.rivesaudio.com)), you

You may also want to tailor a home theater's sound to your personal tastes, such as increasing the bass on your receiver or subwoofer to give movie sound effects more punch or increasing the treble and mid-range frequencies to improve quiet dialogue. Before you make any drastic changes, write down your present calibrated settings in case you're unable to return the speakers to their balanced sound. Once you properly adjust your home-theater system, you can watch movies without needing to have the remote handy to adjust the volume to hear dialog or bass notes. **FG**

BY NATHAN LAKE

# Go Pro

## Progressive-Scan vs. Interlaced In DVD Players

**W**ant to get the most out of your DVDs? Be sure to enable progressive-scan mode (also called 480p) using the setup menus, and assuming your DVD player and television support that type of video signal.

In the days before DVD players flooded living rooms, video from broadcasters and VHS players was encoded in interlaced (480i) format, so the content would play on standard 480i TVs. 480 refers to the set's **vertical resolution**, meaning there are 480 rows of pixels stacked on top of one another that change color to display the images you see on the TV. Each row is one pixel high by 640 pixels wide, so 480i (and 480p) has a total resolution of 640 x 480, representing a grid of 307,200 individual pixels.

Why should you care? Because with 480i, only half of those 480 rows are visible at any given time, which causes some big image-quality problems. 480i signals divide each frame of video into two fields. One field contains all of the odd-numbered rows, while the other contains all of the even-numbered rows. To recreate the entire frame, the television must display the first field for 1/60 of a second, followed by the second field for 1/60 of a second, and then do this over and over again to display 30 frames of video each second. The two fields are displayed quickly enough that they fool your eye into thinking that there is a solid picture on the screen, but there are serious drawbacks. Brightness is reduced because only half the screen is lit at any time, fast motion is problematic because

fields do not match up properly, and the screen flickers noticeably as the fields cycle.

480p eliminates all of these problems by displaying the entire frame of video at once. This mode is especially important for digital televisions, such as LCD, plasma, DLP, and LCoS, because they are designed by default to display progressive-scan images and do not handle interlaced content very well. For more information on LCD and plasma TVs, see pages 36 and 38, respectively.

All commercial DVDs contain 480p content by default, but you can only get the most from it if your DVD player outputs 480p (nearly all do), you have a 480p television, and 480p mode is enabled on both devices. Some DVD players upconvert 480p DVDs to 720p or 1080p, which are progressive-scan HDTV resolutions, but this isn't a true high-definition signal because the original content is encoded in 480p. Be aware that no CRT television, even if it's an HDTV, truly supports progressive-scan output. Because of the way CRT technology works, all video frames are divided into two fields, so even if the set accepts a 480p signal, it isn't really displaying progressive-scan output. Finally, composite, S-Video, and RF (radio frequency) connections don't



support 480p, but component, VGA, DVI, and HDMI connections do. Check the manuals for your DVD player and TV for these settings, buy the right cables, and enjoy the show. **FG**

BY TRACY BAKER

### Key Points

- 480p is always better than 480i, provided your set supports it
- RF, composite, and S-Video outputs will not carry a 480p signal
- Component, VGA, DVI, and HDMI outputs will carry a 480p signal
- Be sure to enable 480p on the DVD player and TV
- CRT televisions only display interlaced video, even if they accept a progressive-scan signal

## tips

### Build Your Own Home Theater With Separate Components

#### 1

##### Speaker Size

Although you'll be buying speakers a la carte, you'll treat most of them as pairs. In a 5.1 system, you'll have a front pair and a rear/surround pair, plus the center channel and subwoofer. Smaller, bookshelf speakers can handle surround duty well. How you intend to use your sound system may dictate the front pair's size. If they're solely for home theater, you can likely get away with smaller speakers here, too. But if you'll also be using the system to play music (or have a large room), you'll get more pleasing results with larger speakers—mid sized or towers and, ideally, a three-way design (woofer, tweeter, and midrange components).

#### 2

##### Speaker Consistency

Buying separate components is one thing. Mixing speaker brands is another, and it's not a good idea. For your full-range speakers, stick to the same brand and, preferably, speakers within the same line. Different brands (and sometimes different lines by the same manufacturer) can exhibit different sonic characteristics, with slight emphasis on particular frequency ranges. This is due to cabinet materials, internal components, etc. A center channel of a different brand, for example, might throw off the overall sonic uniformity. However, a subwoofer of a different brand will be more forgiving because its frequency range is limited to low tones.

#### 3

##### Watts Up

The surround-sound receiver is your system's heart, pumping out audio to the various speakers. Make sure your receiver has enough power per channel to do the job based on room size. Here are some loose guidelines:

- **Small rooms (under 200 square feet):**  
Around 100 watts per channel
- **Medium rooms (200 to 300 square feet):**  
150 to 200 watts
- **Large rooms (over 300 square feet):**  
300 to 400 watts

Also, get speakers whose power ratings meet or exceed the receiver's wattage.

#### 4

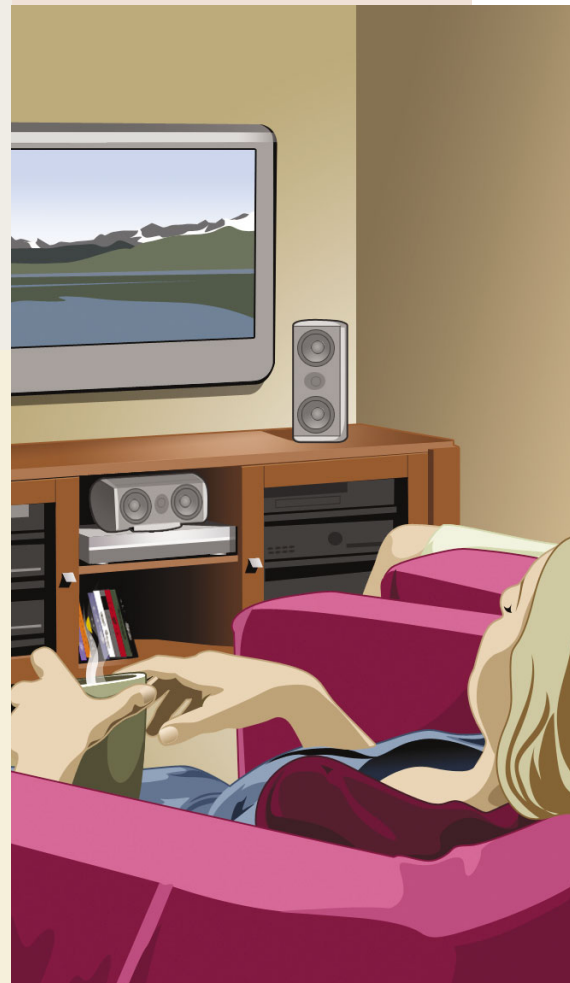
##### Receiver Connections

Go for a receiver with more input options than you think you'll initially need. This will give you room to add more system components—say, a high-def DVD player or game console—or change existing components without finding yourself short of the necessary connections. For multichannel audio, look for several digital coaxial and optical inputs, plus stereo analog jacks. If you also plan to route video signals through your receiver, rather than directly into the TV, the main standards are composite video (but only for older gear such as VCRs), component, DVI, and HDMI (which also carries multichannel audio).

#### 5

##### Gauge Your Setup

Don't overlook the receiver's setup menu. Here, you'll optimize the system's performance by configuring the signal on each channel for the size of the speaker you're using, inputting the distance between each speaker and your listening position, and so on. Most receivers also play a test tone so you can set the volume for each speaker relative to the others. To do this precisely, forget about guesswork with your ears. Instead, calibrate it with an SPL (sound pressure level) gauge, such as American Recorder's SPL-8810 Sound Level Meter (\$120; [www.americanrecorder.com](http://www.americanrecorder.com)).



BY BRIAN HODGE





# Lessons In HDTV

## HD By Any Other Name

**P**lasmas, LCDs, and DLPs aren't the only high-definition television options you have, although they've probably generated the most buzz lately. You may not have heard much about LCoS (liquid-crystal on silicon; also known as HD-ILA or SXRD), and that's what we're here for. If you're in the market for a spectacular picture and a reasonable price, you'll do well to consider some of the new LCoS models hitting stores this spring.

LCoS is a projection technology that bounces light through liquid crystals and off silicon chips to create bright, natural-looking pictures. The chip has a reflective surface underneath the liquid crystals, but it's not a moving mirror as with a DLP TV. The light goes through the crystal, off the chip, and back up through the crystal again. Most sets use three chips, dedicating one to each of the primary colors. LCoS emerged more slowly than competing standards partly because the manufacturing processes took longer to master, although JVC and other manufacturers have been selling sets for several years.

You won't find LCoS HDTVs in the small-screen or bargain departments. Most models have 50- to 60-inch screens, which are big enough for almost any family room but limits their appeal for small-room viewers. LCoS models cost about 20% more than competing projection sets, but 20% less than similarly sized plasmas or LCD TVs.

Unlike the projection techniques in DLP, though, LCoS doesn't use color wheels or oscillating mirrors and isn't subject to the visual artifacts that can mar DLP images, such as screen door or rainbow effects.

Among LCoS' other strengths are a higher natural resolution, smoother pictures, and brighter colors than other television technologies. Today's LCoS televisions offer native 1080p resolution, which means that images don't have to be converted to reach the highest resolutions. And LCoS' triple-chip design provides three distinct color sources for each pixel, rather than bunching different-colored pixels close together. Pay attention to black levels and contrast, however. LCoS televisions manufactured before 2006 struggled with reproducing dark blacks, but the models from the last year are much improved.

A handful of manufacturers, including Sony, JVC, and Hitachi, feature new

LCoS models. SXRD is Sony's LCoS implementation, selling under the Grand WEGA line, and JVC brands its televisions HD-ILA. Like almost all HDTVs, LCoS sports bigger screens, dramatically smaller footprints, and incredibly improved pictures compared to traditional CRT televisions. The space limitations and technological designs of projection models, until very recently, prevented slim profiles and hang-on-the-wall elegance. However, JVC recently announced its 58-inch HD-58S998 (\$3,300; [www.jvc.com](http://www.jvc.com)), which, at a somewhat thin 10.7-inches deep, can be mounted on a wall.

When shopping for LCoS, as with any emerging technology, look for recognized brand names with some history of mass-producing the televisions. Make sure you have the opportunity to view the sets in the store, which can be difficult when just a few models are available. If you're looking for a television with a small footprint and low price, you may not find a LCoS TV that fits your budget or space constraints. But if image quality and a large screen size are paramount, you may want to look at the increasing number of LCoS TVs on the market. **FG**

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BY GREGORY ANDERSON

## tips

### HDTV For An Open-Concept Living Space

#### 1

#### Budget

Begin by considering your budget. Before deciding on a price limit, though, consider the use of the set. Nielsen Media Research reports that people in the United States watch an average of four and a half hours of television each day. Television is our primary source of home entertainment. If the HDTV you are purchasing will be the one watched most often, then it may be worth spending a bit more on it.

#### 2

#### An Angle For Everything

Good picture quality from every angle is key in an open space. In the display room, stand directly in front of the HDTV and then move in a semicircle to the left or right of the screen. Look for unintended color changes, double images, or shadows as you move, especially when viewing words on the screen. The wider the viewing angle, the more flexible you can be with your seating arrangement.

#### 3

#### Size Things Up

16:9 TV Diagonal Screen Size (in inches)	Minimum Viewing Distance (in feet)	Maximum Viewing Distance (in feet)
26	3.3	6.5
30	3.8	7.6
34	4.3	8.5
42	5.3	10.5
47	5.9	11.8
50	6.3	12.5
55	6.9	12.8
60	7.5	15
65	8.1	16.2

imum and maximum viewing distances for widescreen sets.

Where will you put your HDTV? As you measure the space, make sure you leave at least an inch on each side of the TV for ventilation. You will also want the TV to deliver the right-sized picture for where you will sit in the room. The chart shows general guidelines for min-

#### 4

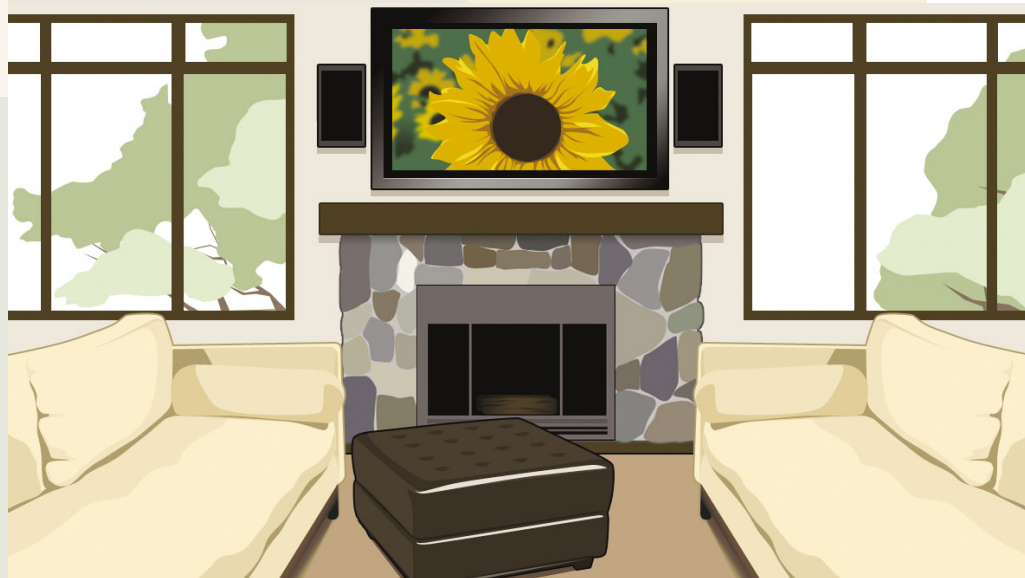
#### Mirror, Mirror

You want to watch what's on TV, not what's going on in the room, so look for a set with minimal reflection. If your room is bright, you'll also want a bright set. An LCD or micro-display may be your best choice, as long as the set doesn't have a glare-inducing plastic shield on the front. In a darker room without much glare, look for a set that will give you excellent black levels. A plasma, CRT, or RPTV will work best in a darker room.

#### 5

#### Appearance

No matter which HDTV you have your heart set on or what reviewers and friends say, you'll eventually have to live with the TV you buy. Go to a showroom at an electronics store (such as Best Buy) and check out the TV for yourself. How does it look turned off? Does it fit with your décor? With the set turned on, adjust the settings for color, brightness, and contrast to your taste and then stand the same distance from the set as you will sit from it at home. If you like what you see in the store, you will probably like it at home.



BY GWEN HURST-ANDERSON

# The Low-Down On 1080p

## The Resolution You're Looking For

**B**ecause OTA (over-the-air) and cable TV stations have yet to broadcast in 1080p, you may be apprehensive about investing in an expensive HDTV that supports 1080p. However, with the introduction of HD-DVD and BD (Blu-ray Disc) players that support 1080p technology, HDTVs with a resolution of 1080p can display a picture quality that's superior to HDTVs with resolutions of 720p or 1080i. We'll detail how a 1080p HDTV differs from 720p and 1080i, so you can decide whether you want to invest in a 1080p HDTV now.

### Battle Lines Are Drawn

Resolution indicates the overall picture quality a TV can display. The 1080 or 720 numbers indicate how many horizontal lines are drawn in each frame of video. The greater the number, the sharper the content. 1080p and 1080i draw 1,080 horizontal lines in each frame. This produces a screen that's 1,920 pixels wide by 1,080 pixels high, more than twice the pixels found in 720p.

The "p" and the "i" represent the method an HDTV uses to refresh its screen—"p" indicates progressive scan, and "i" means interlaced. With 1080i, each frame splits into odd and even fields, which quickly alternate to create a single frame of video. When an interlaced video displays fast motion, the alternating fields may flicker. The progressive-scan method draws an entire frame to produce smooth motion with superior picture clarity.

### Why You Should Invest In 1080p

- A 1080p HDTV produces better overall picture quality than 1080i or 720p.
- Fixed-pixel HDTVs must display content in their native resolutions.
- A 720p HDTV degrades the picture quality when displaying 1080i and 1080p content.
- A 1080i HDTV must interlace any progressive-scan content.
- 1080p content looks its best on a 1080p HDTV.

### A Wise Investment

When considering a TV's resolution, note how well it displays content, such as an HD broadcast from ABC (720p) or CBS (1080i). You'll also want to think about how well your TV will handle future content, such as 1080p broadcasts and movies. LCD and plasma HDTVs are fixed-pixel displays, meaning that any incoming signals *not* sent in the fixed resolution (sometimes called native resolution) of the HDTV are converted to fit the screen's native resolution. To convert the signal, HDTVs apply an algorithm to upscale or downscale the source pixels. For example, when a 720p HDTV displays 1080i or 1080p content, it sacrifices picture quality because it downscales the 1,920 x 1,080 pixel signal to fit a 1,280 x 720

native resolution. Additionally, when a 1080i HDTV displays content from a progressive-scan source, such as ESPN HD in 720p, it interlaces the video, which may result in flicker.

When content is converted to another resolution, picture quality is lost. It's ideal to watch a 720p broadcast, for instance, on an HDTV with a matching native resolution. However, it's difficult to match the output resolution of your home-theater equipment to your HDTV because OTA and cable TV stations have no standard HD resolution, and Nintendo Wii (480p), Xbox 360 (1080i), and PS3 (1080p) all feature different output resolutions.

### Good, Better, Best

An HDTV with a 1080p resolution displays 1080i content better than an HDTV with a 720p resolution because the 1080p HDTV doesn't downscale the signal. And when handling progressive-scan content, such as the 480p video of a standard DVD player, a 1080p HDTV outperforms a 1080i HDTV because it doesn't convert video to the inferior interlaced format. Most importantly, a 1080p HDTV is the only HDTV capable of displaying 1080p content without degrading the signal or interlacing the video. A 1080p HDTV may cost more, but we think it's a good investment because it handles a true 1080p signal and the variety of 720p and 1080i content better than TVs that top out at 720p or 1080i. **FG**

BY NATHAN LAKE



# Top **5** Things To Know About Plasma TVs

**P**lasma HDTVs are known for their superb contrast and incredible color fidelity, but there are a few tricks to the technology. Whether you're buying a plasma set or already have one, keep the following tips in mind.

**1 EDTV isn't HDTV.** Most plasma TVs support HDTV resolutions, such as 720p, 1080i, and 1080p. There are still a few EDTV (Enhanced Definition Televisions) plasma models available, and they don't support high definition. The highest resolution these sets support is 480p, which is great for commercial DVDs, but EDTVs won't let you get the most out of HD DVDs or BDs (Blu-ray discs); high-definition feeds from your TV programming provider; HD output from consoles, such as the PlayStation3; or HD from any device, period. If the price seems too good to be true, make sure is the plasma TV you're considering is a true HDTV and not an EDTV.

**2 Watch the weight.** Plasma displays are only a few inches thick regardless of the overall screen size, so it's tempting to wall-mount them; however, these screens are relatively heavy so make sure your wall can handle the stress. Standard drywall won't hold the largest sets, so you'll need to strengthen the wall before mounting the display. If you buy a large plasma TV (50 inches or bigger), budget for a contractor to handle the mounting, as they'll know how to reduce wall stress and give you some recourse if

your beautiful new TV literally brings down the house.

**3 Go gentle.** Plasma displays require special handling for the first 100 to 200 hours of use. Avoid displaying static images, such as the health bars and other on-screen information in video games, for long periods of time, as those images may permanently burn into the screen, leaving ghostly remnants when you watch other content. Avoid maximizing the set's brightness or contrast levels during this period, and if the TV supports **pixel shifting** (moving on-screen content a few pixels to the left, right, up, or down every few minutes to prevent burn in), be sure to enable it. You likely won't notice that pixel shifting is turned on, and it can really help prevent burn in.

**4 Will it fade?** Plasma screens contain argon, neon, and xenon which break down over time, causing screen brightness to fade. In the past this was a big problem as the half-life of the set was 10,000 to

20,000 hours. Today's sets last much longer than that (some claim 60,000 hours), and you won't have to replace the backlights as you do in LCD and RPTVs.

**5 A big screen = bigger bills.** Each pixel on a plasma display is lit individually, and those millions of colored dots require a lot of energy to produce the bright, vibrant images for which plasma sets are known. Although the energy draw is comparable to a CRT TV, plasma screens can be much larger than CRTs, compounding the electrical requirements. For example, a large plasma display (58 inches or larger) can draw 600+ watts of power when used, so expect a higher electric bill if you use the TV several hours per day. **PG**

BY TRACY BAKER

*Accessory*  
Monster Home Theater PowerCenter  
\$79.99 • [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)

You've no doubt invested a bit of time and money selecting the various components of your home theater, including your new plasma HDTV. Don't use just any old power strip and hope they're safe from a power surge. Invest in a good-quality surge protector to safeguard your home-theater components from seasonal storms and power spikes.



# Top 5 Things To Know About LCD TVs

**R**ecently, LCD technology has made drastic leaps in performance to display TV shows and movies at qualities comparable to direct view CRT displays at a fraction of the bulk. Before you dish out for that sleek LCD you've been eyeballing, there are a few things to consider.

**1 Black levels.** Generally, LCD TVs are as visually appealing as their plasma counterparts (for more about what to consider before buying a plasma TV, see "Top 5 Things To Know About Plasma TVs" on page 26), but displaying blacks is not one of an LCD's strengths. Make sure you can control the ambient light in the room. In bright light, dark portions of the LCD TV may appear grayish as light bleeds through the liquid crystals. Lots of sunlight shining on your LCD exacerbates this problem. Also, look for an LCD TV with a contrast ratio of 2,000:1 or better; these sets are capable of displaying more accurate black levels regardless of the lighting conditions.

**2 Viewing distance.** Make sure your LCD TV is an appropriate size for your room. You can find LCD TVs with screens ranging from 5 inches to 42 inches or more, but to prevent eye strain and get the best view, you'll want to install the LCD TV between 1.5 feet and 3 feet away from your sitting area for every 12 inches of screen size. For instance, for the clearest viewing, sit between 5.25 feet and 10.5 feet away from a 42-inch LCD TV.

**3 Response time.** Get an LCD TV with a fast response time (the lower the number, the better). **Response time** refers to the amount of time it takes the liquid crystals to twist or untwist to block and unblock the light of each pixel. LCDs are getting better every day, but models with slow response times can suffer from ghosting, which means scenes with a lot of fast-moving action look a bit blurry. Shoot for a display with a response time of 10ms (milliseconds) or better.

**4 Viewing angle.** The viewing angle refers to the widest angle at which you can view the TV without noticing a decrease in color saturation, contrast, and brightness. Most LCD TVs currently available have respectable viewing angles or 150 degrees or better, but some less expensive models may cut corners here. Although you may not notice a poor viewing angle when you sit directly in front of the TV, anyone who sits on the far sides of the sofa may have to

strain to get a good view. Excellent viewing angles of 170 degrees or better are available in many LCD TVs.

**5 A good fit.** Think about where you'll set up the LCD TV. If you're buying an LCD TV to replace your old tube-style TV, you may need to rethink your entire entertainment area. Putting your sleek LCD TV into a deep set cabinet can be a waste of space, but mounting it to a wall or setting it up on a stand will require additional hardware. If you plan for these incidentals from the start, you can avoid the shock of having to fork out even more just to get your TV where you want it. **FG**

BY ANDREW LEIBMAN

## Accessory

Sanus Systems VisionMount VM1  
\$79.99 • [www.sanus.com](http://www.sanus.com)

The VM1 lets you wall-mount LCD TVs or monitors that weigh less than 50 pounds. Once mounted, you can swivel and tilt the display until you get the perfect viewing angle. You'll find the VM1 with finishes in black or silver, and the mount can accommodate most LCDs with screens measuring between 13 and 30 inches.



## Plasma & LCD TVs

### What's The Difference?



Flat-panel televisions continue to top electronics shoppers' wish lists. However, plasma and LCD sets are based on two very different technologies, so knowing their advantages and disadvantages will help you make an informed decision about which to bring home.

BY BRIAN HODGE

#### Plasma

##### Pros

- Because plasma TVs are also based on phosphorescent screen technology, their picture most resembles that of tube TVs in terms of brightness, color depth and shading, and picture clarity.
- Plasma still has the edge over LCDs on contrast ratio (often as high as 10,000:1), black levels, and reproducing subtle color shadings, particularly in dim scenes.
- Pixel response is very rapid, so fast-moving imagery shouldn't blur.
- Plasma sets are generally more affordable in larger screen sizes—say, over 50 inches.
- Although this is a more subjective evaluation, many viewers find that plasma sets do a better job of scaling up lower-resolution standard-definition TV signals.

##### Cons

- Some plasmas consume more electricity and put out much more heat during use than LCDs.
- At higher altitudes (above 6,500 feet), lower air pressure can cause the set to produce a buzzing noise similar to a neon sign.
- Although it's less likely now than with older sets, plasmas (usually cheaper, low-quality models) can still be susceptible to burn-in from static images such as stock-ticker bars and video-game gauges.
- With sets of equivalent size, plasmas are much heavier than LCDs, which can affect plans for wall mounting, and they can also be harder for one person to move.

##### Plasma Is Best For:

- Movie buffs
- Sports fanatics
- Viewers shopping for a large set
- Viewers prepared to pay for professional installation

#### LCD

##### Pros

- LCDs run cooler and often require less power to operate than plasma TVs.
- LCDs use a screen coating that reflects little ambient light, so glare and washout aren't a problem even under bright lighting conditions.
- There's no chance of image burn-in.
- Many LCD TVs have PC-compatible connections so the set can double as a computer monitor.
- With a few exceptions, LCD is your main choice for sets 40 inches and under. Most new under-40 inch plasmas come from off-brands that may be more of a gamble than sets from the major names.

##### Cons

- Pixel response may be a tad slower than plasma, so fast-moving imagery might blur.
- New LCDs may have stuck pixels, which show up as bright pinpoints of light. And a hard rap on the screen may break crystals and leave a permanent dark spot.
- True blacks can be difficult to reproduce because the fluorescent backlight still shines through the pixel grid (although some of the newest models are starting to address this by turning off the backlight in select screen areas).
- After a few years of use, the aging backlight may shift color somewhat, forcing the user to recalibrate the set.

##### LCD Is Best For:

- Avid gamers
- Viewers with brightly lit rooms
- Viewers shopping for a smaller set
- Viewers who want to do their own no-fuss installation
- Computer users



# Your Home Theater Go-To Guys

## Best Buy's MAGNOLIA Home Theater Premium Installation Services

**B**ack in the day, setting up a TV was a cinch, but it's more complicated now. Best Buy's Magnolia Premium Home Theater Installation lets you sit back and envision your ultimate viewing and listening environment, while leaving the design, configuration, and installation to Magnolia's trained experts.

### In-Home Consultation

Magnolia offers an in-home consultation service. Schedule an appointment by calling 1-888-MAGNOLIA (1-888-624-6654) or by visiting your local Best Buy and speaking to a customer specialist.

Magnolia's experts spend roughly an hour helping you build your dream A/V system. The experts perform a preliminary walk-through of your home, discussing with you the possibilities and offering advice on choosing products that meet your needs. The cost of the service, which includes a detailed estimate of costs and a diagram of the proposed layout, is \$150. If you buy your equipment at Best Buy and spend more than \$499, you can apply the cost of your consultation toward the purchase.

**In-store experience.** Each Magnolia Best Buy features a Magnolia demo room, in which you'll see and hear what a high-performance home-theater setup should look and sound like in a comfortable living room-like setting. A Magnolia expert will ascertain what it is that you want from your home-theater system.

### Available Services

**M**agnolia offers a range of flexible and comprehensive services to help you realize your ideal home-theater system.

- Consultation
- Delivery and setup
- TV mounting
- Speaker installation
- Universal remotes
- Extras

They'll also make sure you'll have the proper cables and accessories to make it work, as well as ensure you're informed about the product. For instance, if you purchase a new HDTV, the Magnolia expert can inform you about the local availability of digital cable, satellite, and over-the-air services.

**In-home installation.** Magnolia's basic video setup starts at \$100 and includes the plugging in of equipment, assembly and installation of stands or mounts, and the configuration and setup of all video equipment. This service also includes professionally calibrating your HDTV, a service that can typically cost \$300 or more. Other services are available, as well.

### One-Stop Shop

You already know that you can get the products you want at Best Buy, and now you know that you can get it all

### Price Breakdown

**M**agnolia offers a fairly complete list of professional installation services that feature a clear pricing scheme so you can make sure you get a system that fits your lifestyle and your budget.

- In-home system design and layout consultation: \$150
- TV and video setup: \$100
- Home-theater setup: \$200
- Flat-panel TV and projector mounting
  - 20 inches and under: \$300
  - 21 to 32 inches: \$400
  - 33 inches and up: \$500
  - Front projector: \$600
- In-wall speaker installation
  - One speaker: \$100
  - Three speakers: \$200
  - Five speakers: \$300
  - Up to seven speakers: \$400
- Universal remote programming
  - Harmony remote: \$150
  - Other universal remote: \$300

installed and configured to your liking with the help of Best Buy's Magnolia Premium Home Theater Installation service. Perhaps the most important aspect of the service is that Magnolia's experts will teach you to become the expert of your own home theater. **PG**

BY ANDREW LEIBMAN

# What That Tag Really Means

## Know What You're Getting With A DVD Player

**W**hen shopping for the right CE device, it's important to be familiar with the ins and outs of the technology so that you make the most informed decision possible. That's why you can't afford to gloss over the terms listed on a

product tag; those features give you insight into the quality and usability of the product, not to mention the price.

A product's features are key to knowing how it will or won't integrate with other devices. This is especially true with DVD

players, an essential component in your home entertainment system.

With the mandatory switch to all-digital broadcasts looming on the horizon, now is a good time to pay close attention to what those terms on a new DVD player's tag really mean.

**Progressive-Scan.** This term refers to a method of displaying or drawing images on a screen; the other method is called **interlaced scan**. With progressive-scan, the lines that compose an image are drawn onto the screen one at a time, in order, in a single pass. An entire frame is drawn on the display 60 times a second. While progressive-scan looks better than interlaced, you can't enjoy its benefits unless you are watching a digital TV.

Instead of progressive scan, you may see similar terms on DVD player tags that include the word "progressive," such as **Precision Cinema Progressive**. These terms refer to proprietary technology—this one belongs to Sony—that builds upon progressive-scan technology.

**HDMI Output.** The types of outputs a DVD player has are very important, and this interface is the most important of them all for high-definition enthusiasts. An HDMI output lets you use just one cable to make the digital connection between the DVD player and the TV, replacing the tangle of cords you might otherwise need to connect your home entertainment components. The HDMI interface supports all formats of uncompressed digital video—standard, enhanced, and HD—as well as multiple channels of digital audio.

**Upconvert/Upconversion.** A DVD player with this feature upgrades the quality of DVDs through the HDMI connection. The lower screen resolution on a standard DVD is converted to a higher resolution through the HDMI cable running from the player to a digital TV.

better-quality picture than other analog video outputs, such as **composite** and **S-Video**.

**Media Card Reader/Slot.** A media card reader expands the capabilities of a DVD player by enabling it to read multiple file formats, such as JPEG photos; MP3 or WMA audio files; and videos compressed in the MPEG, WMV, or DivX formats. Thus, you can play a slideshow of your digital pictures or play movies written in formats more commonly associated with computers and the Internet on a DVD player that has a media card reader.



**Component Video Output.** This is an analog, not digital, connection from the DVD player to the TV. Component video compresses the RGB (red, green, and blue) images. However, the RGB format is big and takes up a lot of bandwidth, so the component video compresses it into three components. DVDs are encoded in the component video standard. Therefore, a component video output on a DVD player delivers a better-quality picture than other analog video outputs, such as **composite** and **S-Video**.

# 5 Must-Have HDTV Accessories

## To Improve Your View



**1** Invariably, as you amble into the flashy HDTV section of your local consumer electronics store, you'll walk right past shelves of bland-looking HDTV accessories. Sure, these accessories have multichannel audio, gold-plated connectors, nitrogen-injected insulation, and fully articulating mounting arms, but they just can't compete visually with their big-screen, flat-panel HDTV counterparts. Despite outward appearances, however, there are a handful of accessories that are absolutely vital to getting the most from your HDTV.

**1 HDMI cables.** A fully digital source is the key to that pristine high-definition image you see on your HDTV, whether supplied by a Blu-ray or HD DVD player, DVR, set-top box, or other high-def source. To keep that signal as clean and sharp as possible, you'll need an HDMI cable to span between your HDMI-capable devices and your HDTV. This all-in-one cable carries uncompressed digital audio and digital video signals and supports the HDCP (High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection) protocol so you can view HD video even if it has content protection enabled. The Acoustic Research 6-foot HDMI cable

(\$99.99; [www.araccessories.com](http://www.araccessories.com)) is the perfect accessory to pass your digital signals between devices.

**2 Wall mount.** There's no better way to show off your flat-panel HDTV than to mount it on the wall. Most consumer electronics stores sell a range of wall mounts that can help you really show off your flat-panel HDTV. The Sanus VisionMount Wall Mount, MF110, (\$199.99; [www.sanus.com](http://www.sanus.com)) is capable of holding flat-panel TVs up to 40 inches and 100 pounds. Once installed (retailers such as Best Buy typically offer installation services), you can tilt the HDTV and rotate it up to six degrees in either direction to ensure a perfectly level picture.

**3 Stand.** If you'd rather not drill holes into your walls, a stand is probably the better option. A/V furniture manufacturers offer a variety of stand types. You can get a triangular corner model, a model that includes a mount for flat-panel HDTVs, and stands that include shelves to handle the rest of your A/V gear. The Bell'O TV Stand AVS-622T (\$499.99; [www.bello.com](http://www.bello.com)) can accommodate HDTVs up to 63 inches and six A/V components on the two glass shelves, and it features a cable-management system to keep your wires tucked out of view.

**4 Surround-sound system.** Although you might not immediately think of a surround-sound system as an HDTV accessory, movies and HD broadcasts, which are capable of 5.1 or better surround sound, will sound flat if you're only using the TV's built-in stereo (2-channel) speaker. For a more visceral viewing environment, pony up for a 6-channel or better surround-sound system. The Pioneer HTS-950NXT Home Theater System (\$249.99; [www.pioneer-electronics.com](http://www.pioneer-electronics.com)) consists of four floor-standing speakers (two front and two rear), a center channel speaker, a subwoofer, a progressive-scan DVD player, and a remote control.

**5 Universal remote.** Get rid of that mountain of remotes with a programmable universal remote. The Philips SRU 9600 eight-in-one universal remote (\$149.99; [www.philips.com](http://www.philips.com)) features a back-lit LCD touchscreen that displays only the buttons necessary to control the device that you're currently operating. The SRU 9600 also features a learning capability, which lets you point another device's remote at the SRU 9600 to program it. **FG**

BY ANDREW LEIBMAN



# 10



**B**uying an HDTV is a big decision. There are myriad options and no shortage of accessory choices. And let's face it—you're spending a whole lot of money. We'll help you cut through the clutter and identify the most important things to consider when shopping for the right set for you and your family.

**1 Consider DLP.** Rear-projection has been around a long time, but a relatively recent incarnation called DLP (Digital Light Processing) is making waves in the high-def world. HD DLP TVs cost about 35% less than plasma or LCD sets with similar screen sizes, and they provide equally spectacular pictures. DLP sets are a little deeper and heavier than flatscreen models (for example, the 56-inch Samsung HL-S5679W DLP TV [\$3,299.99; [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)] is 15 inches deep and weighs 90 pounds), but in general, they are still considerably smaller and lighter than CRTs. If your room is big enough to warrant a 60-inch television screen, ask yourself if 11 extra inches of floor space is worth a couple thousand extra dollars in the kids' college funds.

**2 HDMI.** With HDMI, a single, slim cord connects your DVD player or digital television receiver to your television. It supports all high-definition resolutions (720p, 1080i, etc.) and maintains a digital signal throughout the process, avoiding the digital-to-analog

# TIPS

## On Buying An HDTV

conversion that can degrade image quality. It also carries digital multichannel audio, further eliminating the clutter and tangles that come with such a setup.

**3 Buy better cables.** Very few home-theater components, including the most expensive televisions and DVD players, come with quality cables. Plan to spend an extra hundred dollars or so purchasing cables for the highest-resolution formats each device supports (usually HDMI, but DVI and component are also HD-compatible). And don't buy the cheapest or shortest cable on the shelf. Low-quality construction invites electrical interference and unreliable connections, and the cables may not withstand normal wear and tear as well as more expensive ones.

**4 Don't forget the tuner.** As of March 1, 2007, all televisions, regardless of size, must ship with built-in ATSC (Advanced Television Systems Committee) tuners (also called HD tuners). But you may find models without them on store shelves for months afterward. Unless you're certain you'll never want to attach an antenna to grab free local HD programming, make sure your model comes with the tuner.

**5 Don't hang it yourself.** In most cases, it's best to hire a professional to hang your HDTV. A successful wall mount on regular drywall requires the right bracket, a correct alignment to wall studs, and a reliable attachment between the TV and its bracket. Brick or cinder block walls provide an even

greater challenge. Most electronics retailers offer affordable installation services and usually guarantee their work. Unless you're willing to bet your big new investment on your carpentry skills, bring in the experts.

**6 Upconvert.** Regular DVD players don't output high-definition video. You can purchase a Blu-ray Disc or HD DVD player and wait for the studios to release your favorites. Instead, consider purchasing a player that upconverts with special processing technology that converts SD material into almost-HD-quality signals. Many models, such as the Philips DVP5960/37 (\$89.99; [www.philips.com](http://www.philips.com)), cost less than \$100.

**7 Make yourself at home.** Unless your family room is of warehouse proportions with walls of shimmering TV sets, you may not get the most realistic impressions of HDTVs at the store, unless, that is, you take advantage of Best Buy and other retailers' efforts to recreate realistic home environments in some stores. Try to preview your prospective HDTV in realistic surroundings and bring some of your favorite movies to see how they look on your set before you buy.

**8 Size it up.** Finding a set that works in your room is a crucial part of your purchase. A small room and a couch near the TV means you should invest in a fairly small HDTV; a larger space with plenty of seating for friends and family requires a bigger screen. Use the three-to-five rule to calculate

your optimal screen size. Measure the distance, in feet, from your TV's location to your viewing position. Multiply that number by three, and then by five. Those numbers represent the minimum and maximum screen sizes, measured in inches diagonally, for that space. For example, a 10-foot span from your TV to sofa will accommodate screens between 30 and 50 inches.

**9 Calibrate.** When buying an HDTV, don't forget to factor calibration in to your budget. Any one of several DVDs can walk you through the process, including Joe Kane's Digital Video Essentials (\$24.99; [www.videoessentials.com](http://www.videoessentials.com)). You can also hire calibration from the retailer from which you bought your HDTV (prices vary according to retailer and installation plan). Regardless, the results will be far better than the showroom settings many televisions ship with.

**10 Resolution isn't everything.** There's more to brilliant, sharp pictures than screen resolution; color reproduction, contrast, and refresh rates make a big difference, too. Make sure an HDTV's colors are consistently true to life. Next, watch material that features scenes with both dark and bright areas. Blacks shouldn't appear gray, and bright areas shouldn't wash detail away. Finally, watch action scenes carefully to make sure your new set can handle fast-moving material without jagged edges. **PG**

BY GREGORY ANDERSON

# HDTV Glossary

**B** alderdash! OK, HDTV jargon isn't *that* bad, but there are a few terms every shopper should know. Here's your cheat sheet.

**aspect ratio**—Put simply, it's the shape of the TV's screen. An HDTV has a wider picture than a traditional TV of the same vertical screen height. An HDTV has a 16:9 aspect ratio, meaning that if its screen were 16 inches wide, it would be 9 inches tall. A regular 4:3 TV screen would be only 12 inches wide at the same 9-inch height.

**HDMI**—High-Definition Multimedia Interface is a new type of cable connection. It can carry both high-resolution video and uncompressed, multichannel audio among HDTVs, home-theater systems, and other components. HDMI cables are pricy, but they maintain top picture and sound quality.

**HD tuner**—Some more expensive HDTVs have a built-in tuner for receiving local high-definition broadcast TV channels. Your TV doesn't need an HD tuner if you have cable or satellite service. Separate HD tuners and antennas are available for HDTVs without them.

**interlaced**—When an HDTV displays an interlaced image, as in 1080i or 720i resolutions, it really shows you every other horizontal line of a frame of video (called a field) at a time. Sixty times a second, the TV displays the other field of the frame, meaning the lines not shown in the previous field. Interlaced video can seem to flicker and cause moving objects on-screen to have blurred edges.

**LCD**—Like a notebook's screen, a liquid-crystal display HDTV uses a fluid crystal



substance to form pixels of color in front of a backlight. LCDs may not be able to match plasma TVs' deep black and gray areas, but they're lighter, sometimes less fragile, and considered easier to set up. LCDs also are catching up to plasmas in size and price and are expected to supplant them in the market.

**plasma**—Plasma TVs use a tiny tube of gas for each pixel. Electricity makes each pixel glow. Plasmas are still available in bigger sizes than LCDs and create deeper blacks and sometimes brighter colors. However, older or less expensive models can also suffer permanent screen damage if an unchanging image is displayed too long, such as a TV channel's stock ticker or parts of certain video games.

**progressive scan**—A TV showing a progressively scanned image, as in 1080p or 720p resolutions, displays a full frame of video (both odd-lined and even-lined fields) all at once. Progressive-scan video

looks sharper and doesn't flicker like interlaced images can.

**projection**—Some large-screen HDTVs offer low-priced alternatives to LCD or plasma by using projection technologies. These technologies vary, but all projection TVs throw light on a screen from the front or rear. This means they're a little to a lot bulkier than plasmas or LCDs, but some rear-projection sets have stellar picture quality.

**viewing angle**—No matter where you sit in front of an HDTV with a wide viewing angle, such as 170 degrees, its picture should look reasonably good. Test this before you buy.

**widescreen**—A TV or monitor that's wider horizontally in relation to its vertical height—typically with a 16:9 aspect ratio for HDTVs—than an older 4:3 display.

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BY MARTY SEMS





## Which Type Of HDTV Is Right For You?

**P**lasma, LCD, and projection: These are the three main types of HDTVs from which you'll choose if you're in the market for a sleek, new set. Refer to our comparison chart below to see how the technologies stack up against each other.

What It Is	What It Means	Plasma	LCD	Microdisplay Rear Projection
<b>Technology</b>	Different types of HDTVs use different technologies; understanding each type can help make your decision easier.	Plasma uses a network of cells, each filled with a gas mixture. When the gas is excited, it lights up, and the cells form the image on your HDTV.	Light is streamed through cells filled with a liquid crystal mixture. When charged, the intensity changes, forming the image on your HDTV.	There are three main types of rear-projection microdisplay: DLP, LCD, and LCOS. All use a lamp to bounce light off a chip onto the screen.
<b>Size</b>	The screen's diagonal size	Up to around 60 inches	Up to around 46 inches	Up to 65 inches and beyond
<b>Depth</b>	The depth of the set as a whole	4 to 5 inches deep	4 to 5 inches deep	From around 16 to 22 inches deep
<b>Wall mountable</b>	Can be mounted with a special bracket	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Color reproduction</b>	The brightness, saturation, and black level of an HDTV are some of the most important considerations.	Excellent brightness, color saturation, and black levels	Exceptional brightness; very good color saturation; black level quality is improving	Exceptional brightness and color saturation; generally excellent black levels
<b>Ideal room type</b>	Some types of HDTVs fit better in certain rooms than others.	Media rooms with various seating areas	Rooms with windows or other ambient light	Larger rooms with a little extra floor space
<b>Cost</b>	HDTV prices range quite a bit depending on the technology.	Expensive, though much less so than two years ago	Expensive, but generally less than plasma	Relatively inexpensive
<b>Perfect for</b>		TV fanatic who values picture quality above everything else	Gamers who also love HDTV	Big-screen lovers on a budget
<b>Coollest feature</b>		Excellent response time for high action	In general, can also be used as a PC monitor	Exceptional value for size



Plasma



LCD



Microdisplay Rear Projection



## Which Plasma TV Is Right For You?



If you're planning on buying a plasma HDTV, it might be hard to decide on one just by looking at a wall of gorgeous sets. Refer to this chart, which compares 42-inch plasma TVs available at Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)) for help when shopping.

What It Is	What It Means	HP PL4260N	Hitachi UltraVision 42HDS69	LG 42PC3D
<b>Size</b>	The diagonal measurement of the TV's screen	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches
<b>Dimensions (without stand)</b>	Height x width x depth	26x53.5x3.75 inches	25.5x45x4.25 inches	27.5x44.5x4 inches
<b>Weight (without stand)</b>	How much the TV weighs	89.4 pounds	75 pounds	55.6 pounds
<b>Native Resolution</b>	The image's sharpness is best when displayed at the native resolution. Anything else must be converted.	720p	1080i	720p
<b>Contrast Ratio</b>	The difference in intensity of the brightest white and the darkest black; higher ratios are better.	10,000:1	N/A	10,000:1
<b>Built-in HD Tuner</b>	An ATSC tuner capable of picking up a digital signal; you need one for hi-def.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Viewing angle</b>	The maximum angle at which the viewer can see the screen clearly.	176 degrees	N/A	N/A
<b>Inputs</b>	Inputs let you connect your components to your TV.	1 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 1 RF	3 HDMI; 3 component; 2 S-Video; 5 A/V; 1 RF	1 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 1 RF
<b>Target viewing distance</b>	Decide how far your couch will be from your HDTV so you can buy the right-sized set.	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet
<b>Coollest feature</b>		Color and brightness enhancement	Anti-reflective glass screen	Image Sticking Minimization feature
<b>Best Buy price</b>		\$1,499.99	\$1,619.99	\$1,799.99



HP PL4260N



Hitachi UltraVision 42HDS69



LG 42PC3D



Panasonic TH-42PX60U

# home theater

	Panasonic TH-42PX60U	Philips Ambilight 42PF9631D/37	Pioneer PDP-4270HD	Samsung HP-S4253	Toshiba TheaterWide 42HP66
	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches
	27.5x40x4 inches	31.5x45x4.5 inches	26.75x41x4.5 inches	28x41.5x4 inches	31x42.5x13.5 inches
	65 pounds	97 pounds	63.9 pounds	88.2 pounds	90.4 pounds (with stand)
	720p	720p	720p	720p	720p
	10,000:1	10,000:1	N/A	10,000:1	10,000:1
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	170 degrees	160 degrees	160 degrees	175 degrees	160 degrees
	2 HDMI; 2 component; 3 S-Video;	2 HDMI; 2 component; 3 S-Video; 2 A/V; 1 PC	2 HDMI; 3 component; 2 S-Video	2 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video;	2 HDMI; 2 component; 1 S-Video; 1 RF
	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet
	One-button EZ-Sync technology	Ambilight technology	CableCARD slot & TV Guide On Screen	Hidden speakers	Built-in 20W speakers
	\$1,799.99	\$2,799.99	\$2,299.99	\$1,619.99	\$1,619.99



Philips Ambilight 42PF9631D/37



Pioneer PDP-4270HD



Samsung HP-S4253



Toshiba TheaterWide 42HP66



## Which LCD TV Is Right For You?



So you've decided to get an LCD TV. The next step is deciding *which* LCD TV to invest in. If you're like most people, you're probably looking at a set that's in the 40- to 42-inch range. Refer to this chart for help when shopping.

What It Is	What It Means	JVC LT-40X667	Sony Bravia KDL-40S2010	Samsung LN-S4092D
<b>Size</b>	The diagonal measurement of the TV's screen	40 inches	40 inches	40 inches
<b>Dimensions (without stand)</b>	Height x width x depth	26.5x39x4.5 inches	26x39x4 inches	27x39x4.5 inches
<b>Weight (without stand)</b>	How much the TV weighs	68 pounds	46.3 pounds	60.6 pounds
<b>Native Resolution</b>	The image's sharpness is best when displayed at the native resolution. Anything else must be converted.	720p	720p	720p
<b>Contrast Ratio</b>	The difference in intensity of the brightest white and the darkest black; higher ratios are better.	800:1	1,300:1	5,000:1
<b>Built-in HD Tuner</b>	ATSC tuner that can pick up a digital signal; you need one for hi-def.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Viewing angle</b>	The maximum angle at which the viewer can see the screen clearly.	170 degrees	178 degrees	178 degrees
<b>Inputs</b>	Inputs let you connect your components to your TV.	2 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 3 A/V; 1 RF	1 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 1 RF	2 HDMI; 1 component; 2 S-Video; 2 RF
<b>Target viewing distance</b>	Decide how far your couch will be from your HDTV so you can buy the right-sized set.	5 to 10 feet	5 to 10 feet	5 to 10 feet
<b>Cooler feature</b>		Excellent black levels	Sensor adjusts brightness to match room	Gaming mode
<b>Best Buy price</b>		\$1,599.99	\$1,999.99	\$1,899.99



JVC LT-40X667



Sony Bravia KDL-40S2010



Samsung LN-S4092D



Toshiba TheaterWide 42HL196

# home theater

	<b>Toshiba TheaterWide 42HL196</b>	<b>Philips Ambilight 42PF9731D/37</b>	<b>Westinghouse W4207</b>	<b>Sharp AQUOS LC- 42D62U</b>	<b>LG 42LB1DR</b>
	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches	42 inches
	28.5x41x5 inches	30x43x4.5 inches	27x42x5 inches	28x40.5x5 inches	26x46x5 inches
	63.7 pounds	92.6 pounds	58.4 pounds	66.2 pounds	80.8 pounds
	1080p	720p	720p	1080p	720p
	800:1	4,000:1	1,600:1	1,200:1	1,600:1
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	176 degrees	176 degrees	178 degrees	176 degrees	178 degrees
	2 HDMI; 2 component; 1 S-Video; 2 A/V; 2 RF	2 HDMI; 2 component; 3 S-Video; 1 RF	1 HDMI; 2 component; 1 S-Video; 1 DVI; 1 PC	2 HDMI; 2 component 1 S-Video;	2 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 1 RF
	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet	5 to 10.5 feet
	1080p resolution	Ambilight Technology	Contrast ratio	High brightness & contrast	Built-in 160GB DVR
	\$1,999.99	\$2,299.99	\$1,299.99	\$2,299.99	\$1,899.99



Philips Ambilight



Westinghouse W4207



Sharp AQUOS LC-42D62U



LG 42LB1DR

## Which Microdisplay TV Is Best For You?



If you're in the market for a big HDTV, a rear-projection microdisplay model can give you a lot of bang for your buck. Here is a chart that compares eight 55- to 60-inch models, all available at Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)).

What It Is	What It Means	Hitachi UltraVision 55VS69	JVC HD56FN97	Mitsubishi WD-57731
<b>Projection Technology</b>	Depending on the manufacturer, the TV will have DLP, LCD, or LCoS microdisplay technology	LCD	LCoS (JVC's name for it is HD-ILA)	DLP
<b>Size</b>	The diagonal measurement of the TV's screen	55 inches	56 inches	57 inches
<b>Dimensions (without stand)</b>	Height x width x depth	34.25x50.75x18 inches	38x52x17.5 inches	36x51.5x18 inches
<b>Weight (without stand)</b>	How much the TV weighs	86 pounds	92 pounds	96 pounds
<b>Native resolution</b>	The image's sharpness is best when displayed at the native resolution. Anything else must be converted.	720p	1080p	1080p
<b>Built-in HD tuner</b>	An ATSC tuner capable of picking up a digital signal; you need one for hi-def.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Inputs</b>	Inputs let you connect your components to your TV.	1 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 5A/V; 1 RF	2 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 4 A/V; 2 RF	2 HDMI; 2 component; 3 S-video; 2 RF
<b>Stand included?</b>	For a microdisplay TV, you'll need some type of stand	No	No	No
<b>Target viewing distance</b>	Decide how far your couch will be from your HDTV so you can buy the right-sized set.	7 to 13 feet	7 to 13 feet	7 to 13 feet
<b>Cooliest feature</b>		Picture-in-picture	1080p native resolution	6-color light engine
<b>Best Buy price</b>		\$1,529.99	\$2,249.99	\$1,979.99



Hitachi UltraVision 55VS69



JVC HD56FN97



Mitsubishi WD-57731



Panasonic PT-56DLX76



# home theater

	Panasonic PT-56DLX76	Philips 60PL9200D37	Samsung HL-S5687W	Sony Grand WEGA KDF-55E2000	Toshiba TheaterWide 56HM66
	DLP	DLP	DLP	LCD	DLP
	56 inches	60 inches	56 inches	55 inches	56 inches
	36.5x52x17.5 inches	36.5x54.5x18.75 inches	35.75x51x16.5 inches	35.75x51.25x17.5 inches	33.75x52.5x18.25 inches
	75 pounds	81.6 pounds	68.4 pounds	75 pounds	72 pounds
	1080p	720p	1080p	720p	720p
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	2 HDMI; 2 component; 3 S-Video; 3 A/V	1 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video	2 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 3 A/V	2 HDMI; 3 component; 1 S-Video; 5 A/V	2 HDMI; 2 component; 2 S-Video; 3 A/V; 2 RF
	No	No	No	No	No
	7 to 13 feet	7.5 to 15 feet	7 to 13 feet	7 to 13 feet	7 to 13 feet
	14,000:1 contrast ratio	Pixel Plus processing technology	Hidden speaker bezel design	Cinema Black Pro for better black levels	Antiglare coating on screen
	\$2,429.99	\$1,979.99	\$2,199.99	\$1,899.99	\$1,699.99



Philips 60PL9200D37



Samsung HL-S5687W



Sony Grand WEGA KDF-55E2000



Toshiba TheaterWide 56HM66

# Digital Imaging Shopping Tips

## Choose The Camera That's Best For You

BY THEANO NIKITAS

**T**he labyrinth of digital camera models, feature sets, and price points is enough to make your head spin. So, whether you're buying your first digital camera or your second (or third), it's important to do your homework before you shell out your hard-earned money. Here are some tips that will help you shop for the digital camera that will best fit your needs.

The model you buy will soon be replaced by a faster, better, and less expensive camera, so choose a model that fits your needs for the foreseeable future. If you want to improve your photographic skills, look for a camera with manual exposure controls (aperture- and shutter-priority and full-manual modes). You may even want a D-SLR (see "Shopping For A Digital SLR" on page 58 in our February 2007 issue for more info) for the ultimate in control and flexibility. If you prefer a no-fuss, no-muss camera, stick with a point-and-shoot model.

You'll be hard-pressed to find a digital camera with fewer than 4MP, which is usually good enough to make decent 8x10 prints. However, most digital cameras on the market are equipped with at least 5MP, which is the minimum megapixel count we suggest if you plan to regularly make 8x10 prints (or slightly larger). Go higher than 5MP to crop your pictures and maintain quality.

For a D-SLR, you can choose your lenses according to focal length. Non-SLR digital cameras, however, have a built-in lens with a set optical zoom range—anywhere from 3X (usually the 35mm equivalent of

about 38 to 104mm) to 10X or 12X (the 35mm equivalent of 38 to 380mm or higher). If the focal range doesn't fit your picture-taking needs, see if the camera offers telephoto or wide-angle accessory lenses. Look at the camera's optical zoom; the digital zoom crops the image in-camera, which degrades image quality. Cropping is better accomplished with image-editing software.

Get hands-on time with the camera. Check the LCD to see how it performs in bright and low light and whether the menu's text and icons are easy to see and understand. If you take pictures outside, where even the best LCD is difficult to see, look for a camera with an optical viewfinder so you can bypass the LCD. Make sure the camera is comfortable to hold, carry, and operate. Can you reach all of the buttons and dials?

When budgeting, know that digital cameras rarely come with a media card so you'll have to buy one (or two). Also, what kind of battery does it use? If it takes AAs, budget for a set of rechargeable AAs and a charger. At the same time, check out the CIPA (Camera & Imaging Product Association) rating; most manufacturers list this rating in the camera specs.

### SHOPPING CHECKLIST

#### ☐ How many megapixels does the camera have?

- ☐ 3                      ☐ 5                      ☐ More  
☐ 4                      ☐ 6

#### ☐ What's the optical zoom range?

- ☐ 3X (general pictures)  
☐ 4X to 6X (brings in distant objects)  
☐ 10X to 12X (wildlife photography and sports events)

#### ☐ What type of battery does the camera use?

- ☐ AA disposables  
☐ Rechargeables  
☐ Proprietary rechargeables

#### ☐ What's the CIPA rating?

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

#### ☐ What accessories are available?

- ☐ Wide-angle accessory lens  
☐ Telephoto accessory lens  
☐ Accessory flash  
☐ Waterproof/underwater housing

#### ☐ What software is bundled with the camera?

- ☐ Viewing software only  
☐ Basic photo-editing software  
☐ Full photo-editing software

# Top 5 Things To Know About Lenses

**P**oint-and-shoot cameras are simple to use, and that's why we love them. But, like any digital camera, the lens is one of its most important components. Knowing some lens basics will help you make a better choice when buying a camera and will also give you some ideas about how the lens affects your picture-taking.

**1 Attached lenses.** Unlike digital SLRs with their interchangeable lenses, the lens on a point-and-shoot camera is permanently attached. Although some higher-end digital cameras, such as the Kodak EasyShare P880 (\$399.95; [www.kodak.com](http://www.kodak.com)), let you attach accessory lenses, point-and-shoot digital cameras typically do not. So, if you're in the market for a new digital camera, choose a lens that gives you the zoom range (see below) that best fits your picture-taking needs.

**2 What is the zoom range?** Look at the front of your camera and you should see a number followed by an X—most likely 3X or 4X. The "X" refers to simple multiplication. Zoom the lens out to its widest position (wide angle). This is your starting point and in the camera specifications is measured in millimeters (mm). Most digital cameras have a wide-angle measurement of 38mm, which means you can take a full (head-to-toe) group

picture of your friends in a relatively large room. Multiply that number by the camera's X factor and you'll have an idea of how close you can zoom into a distant subject. For instance, a camera with a 3X optical zoom will let you get 3 times closer to your subject than what you see at wide angle. Moving the lens to its maximum zoom (telephoto) is used for taking close-up pictures of distant subjects. Larger X numbers, such as 4X or 6X, versus smaller X numbers, such as 2X or 3X, let you zoom in closer.

**3 Optical vs. digital zoom.** Point-and-shoot digital cameras have two types of zoom: an optical zoom and a digital zoom. The **optical zoom** uses the lens to give you a wider or a closer (telephoto) view of your subject. The **digital zoom**, on the other hand, is only used to bring your subject closer. However, the digital zoom option has nothing at all to do with the lens; it basically crops the picture

in-camera—something that you'd be better off doing with an image-editing program. Stick with the optical zoom because the digital zoom may degrade the image.

**4 Care and cleaning.** Treat your lens with care and keep it clean. If there's a spec of dust or dirt—don't use a cloth or lens tissue to wipe it off because that might scratch the lens. Instead, use a blower bulb/ear syringe or a soft brush to remove the particles. For smudges, use a soft microfiber cloth made for lenses, instead of the corner of your shirt hem. A nice combination cleaning tool is a lenspen (starting at \$8.95; [www.lenspen.com](http://www.lenspen.com)), which is a pen-shaped device with a retractable brush on one end and a special cleaning tip on the other end.

**5 Outside air.** With summer quickly approaching, remember that your camera's lens is subject to the same fogging as your glasses when moving from an air conditioned room into the hot, humid outside air. When making the transition, wait about 15 to 30 minutes before turning on the camera so it can get acclimated to the change in temperature. **FE**

BY THEANO NIKITAS



## tips

### Create A Photo Book

#### 1

##### Your Personal Desktop Publisher

With so many online services now offering professionally finished photo books, it's an exciting time to put together those family albums you've always wanted to complete. Check out Best Buy's imagelab (\$29.99 and up; [www.imagelab.bestbuy.com](http://www.imagelab.bestbuy.com)), which is a photo service that can do all of the printing and binding for you. With a service, you generally design your photo book on a Web page or in a program you download and install. Once you're satisfied, save your work and send the results to the photo service over the Internet or in designated Best Buy stores. In a matter of days or weeks, you'll receive a professionally bound book that will likely look incredible and last for decades.

#### 2

##### Be Resolute

Most services accept digital photos in the formats most consumers use, such as JPEG or TIFF. However, you need to be careful to upload photos with a high enough resolution. A service might not allow you to use photos of less than 900 x 600 pixels in size or 200dpi (dots per inch), for example.

#### 3

##### Page Particulars

Research the sizes and number of pages a service offers in its photo books. Most offer anything from a small 4 x 4-inch softcover brag book up to an 8.5 x 11-inch or larger hardbound album. For example, Medium hardcover photo books at Best Buy's imagelab are 8.5 x 11 inches, and you can choose between 20 and 40 pages. Additional pages cost \$1 each. Look for a service that lets you use a variety of templates and layouts for your book (imagelab does), as well as lets you add captions and other text.

#### 4

##### Cover Charge

Inexpensive softcovers are available through most photobook services, but there's something classy about a hardbound photo album. It's like making your own coffee table book. Better services offer hardcovers in a variety of colors and materials; imagelab offers linen, genuine leather, or suede. Some services (imagelab included) also feature a window on the cover through which you can see your book's title page. With imagelab, although you do need to choose a cover material and color right off the bat, it's easy to change your selection later: Simply click the Change Cover button during the Review stage, after you've completed a draft of your book.

#### 5

##### Test Drive

Before you buy anything from a service, try out its photo book design tools to see how much control you will have over the layout. For instance, depending on which template you use, imagelab gives you different photobox shapes (such as oval, rectangle, or square), and you can write your own captions, too. With any service, ascertain whether you can crop photos and adjust colors using the software.



BY MARTY SEMS

# Gift Of The Month

## Gorillapod

W

inter, with its cold weather and short days, has finally passed us by, and spring is in the air. With the arrival of April and the accompanying warmer weather comes the chance to reclaim the outdoors. As the chill in the air subsides and nature begins to awaken, we often find ourselves taking advantage of the chance to enjoy life outside the confines of our homes and offices.

Whether you're taking pictures of the kids flying a kite or capturing the first bloom of the year, spring activities naturally lend themselves to outdoor photo opportunities. However, nature doesn't always present us with the ideal place to set up for that perfect photo, so when we saw the versatility of April's Gift Of The Month, we instantly fell in love. A tripod is a pretty basic accessory for any serious photographer, but Joby's Gorillapod ([www.joby.com](http://www.joby.com)) takes the tripod a step further.

### Flexible Functionality

The Gorillapod is a tripod with legs made up of hard plastic ball joints that you can rotate 360 degrees. Each leg has a rubber foot for traction, and there are rubber rings around each joint to help it stay put once you line up your perfect shot. To see the Gorillapod in action is a bit like watching a strange one-eyed, three-armed creature climbing about. The Joby Web site has a photo gallery

filled with images showing the versatility of the Gorillapod, including cameras set up on rock ledges, kitchen cabinet knobs, and even the top of a wine bottle. (To check out the photos yourself, click the designated picture at the bottom of the home page or any of the Gorillapod product pages.)

The Gorillapod is available in three sizes to work with nearly any digital camera or camcorder. And because Joby is an environmentally friendly company, you can get the Gorillapod with retail packaging or without; going without will save you a few bucks, too. The original Gorillapod (\$21.95; \$24.95, packaged) is 6 inches tall and is meant for compact digital cameras that weigh up to 9.7 ounces. For digital SLRs, there's the Gorillapod SLR (\$39.95; \$44.95, packaged), which is 9.8 inches tall and can hold SLR-type cameras and camcorders that weigh up to 1.75 pounds. Professional equipment will require the Gorillapod SLR-Zoom (\$49.95, only available unpackaged), which is also 9.8

inches tall but holds cameras up to 6.6 pounds that are tripod-mountable, as well as professional tripod heads. Original and SLR Gorillapods come with a locking slim-line attachment that you can attach to your camera for quick and safe setup, while the SLR-Zoom has a 1/4- to 3/8-inch adaptable screw on which you can mount your camera or tripod head.

What we love even more than the versatility of the Gorillapod is that it makes a great gift for anyone with a digital camera. With the range of products available (all of which fall within our \$50 budget), you should be able to find a Gorillapod for any photographer you know and love, regardless of the type of camera she has. By removing the geographic limitations of where she can set up her camera, her photography will be limited only by her imagination. **FG**

BY JOY MARTIN



# Digital Camera Technique Tip

## As White As Snow

**B**right, glistening snow amidst majestic mountains; tree branches dusted with fluffy, white powder; and snow-covered rocks lining a creek are just a few of the beautiful sights after a snowfall. When your winter vacation takes you to the mountains or your kids ask you to come outside and admire their snowman, you want to capture these moments with your digital camera.

But winter photography can be tricky. Perhaps you've heard horror stories about foggy lenses or underexposed shots, but have no fear: By adjusting a few settings on your camera, you're sure to get print-worthy photos.

You're likely to see fog on your lens when you first step outside with your camera. Wait a couple of minutes and let the camera and lens adjust to the temperature, and the fog will disappear. Don't try to wipe it off because you could damage or smudge the lens. Also, protect your camera from snow and water. Plastic bags can be lifesavers when shooting near snow.

Getting the right exposure is a real trick when photographing snow. Because the snow reflects light, the camera usually thinks the scene is too bright. As a result, the camera tries to compensate for the excess brightness by adjusting the snow's color to gray. In the process, you end up with an underexposed, gray picture that doesn't show the true beauty of the scene.



When using automatic settings, the camera misinterpreted the scene as having too much light and compensated by underexposing the shot, making the snow look gray.



By overexposing the same picture by one stop, we get a much better image.

To capture the snow in all its beauty, you'll need to change a couple of settings in your camera. First, adjust your camera's exposure settings. Switch to manual or a semi-automatic mode on your camera and then overexpose the picture by one stop. Depending on the lighting conditions, you may need to tweak the exposure even more.

Once you have the right brightness and eliminated much of the gray, you may notice a bluish hue to your photos. If this is the case, adjust the white-balance setting on your camera. Try the cloudy setting if the lighting is overcast, or try a custom white balance by pointing your camera

at a white patch of snow. Beware of shadows; even a seemingly uniform patch of snow can have darker areas that can inadvertently adjust your white balance.

If you've uploaded your pictures and discovered gray scenes, that's OK, too. Many image-editing programs can fix the photo. Still, it's best to get the correct exposure at the beginning instead of spending a lot of time and effort trying to correct the image. By adjusting the exposure and white-balance settings for snow, you'll have pictures that are ready to print straight from the camera. **FG**

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON



# Digital Camcorder Formats

## New Camcorders Change The Way You Record

**A**lthough manufacturers are still pumping new performance features into the latest camcorder models, they're also focusing on new methods for recording video. If you haven't visited Best Buy's camcorder display recently, you might be surprised to find that the popular MiniDV camcorder has some new friends, including MiniDVD and HDD (hard drive-based) camcorders.

Each camcorder format offers unique features and benefits. Here are some things to keep in mind when you shop for your next camcorder. **FC**

BY JOSHUA GULICK



JVC Everio G ZS-MG37US  
www.jvc.com • \$799

### HDD

- HDD camcorders are generally expensive; expect to pay between \$500 to \$1,000. Hard drive size and features can affect the price.
- A 30GB HDD camcorder can store up to 10 hours of video, which means you don't need to carry extra media.
- Some HDD camcorders can connect to special burn stations that let you burn DVDs without a PC.
- You can generally use a USB 2.0 cable to transfer video to your PC. Virtually all PCs have USB ports, so you should not have any trouble connecting the camcorder to your computer.
- HDD camcorders generally support the MPEG-2 (Moving Picture Experts Group-2) format. Popular video-editing programs, such as Adobe Premiere Elements 3.0, support this format.

**Best For:** Users who record hours of video at a time. If you edit most of the videos you shoot, you'll like the fast transfer speeds.

### MiniDV

- Many MiniDV camcorders use a FireWire cable instead of a USB cord. Make sure your PC has a FireWire port.
- MiniDV camcorders are generally cheaper than newer camcorder models; you can find many MiniDV camcorders for under \$200.
- Today's video-editing software supports the MiniDV format, which means you can easily edit the video you transfer to your PC.
- MiniDV tapes are inexpensive (you can expect to pay under \$20 for a three-pack). You can reuse MiniDV tapes.
- MiniDV offers excellent (near-DVD) video quality, which is a little better than the MPEG-2 format that MiniDVD camcorders and HDD camcorders use.
- Standard MiniDV tapes store about one hour of video.

**Best For:** Budget shoppers and casual users who are willing to spend some extra time transferring video to their PCs.

### MiniDVD

- Discs are inexpensive. Expect to pay less than \$20 for a name-brand five-pack and as little as 58 cents per disc at some online retailers.
- A standard, one-sided MiniDVD holds about half an hour of video and a double-sided DVD stores twice as much.
- MiniDVD camcorders create ready-to-go DVDs in minutes, without a PC. Most traditional DVD players support MiniDVDs, meaning you can record the video, pop it into your DVD player, and watch the video right away.
- Transferring video from a MiniDVD camcorder to video-editing software may be difficult as few programs support MiniDVD yet, according to Gaetan Jeannot, video product manager of Roxio, which publishes MyDVD 9 Studio.

**Best For:** The family videographer who wants to play the video right away. You can record the family get together and leave the disc for your host to enjoy later.

# Most Important Features In A Digital Camera

**P**rices for point-and-shoot digital cameras have continued to drop, even as manufacturers have improved lens quality, added more scene modes and presets, and increased the megapixel counts. You'll have no trouble finding high-quality, decently priced cameras from Kodak, Canon, Nikon, Olympus, Sony, HP, Casio, Panasonic, Pentax, Samsung, and Fuji.



**1 Lens quality.** With a point-and-shoot digital camera, you usually can't change lenses, so you're limited to the camera's integrated lens. If that's the case, pay attention to the specifications for optical zoom, which determine how tightly you can zoom in on your subject. Most sub-\$200 digital cameras have a 3X optical zoom, which is about equal to a 35mm zoom range (38 to 104mm). Greater optical zoom ranges let you zoom in even tighter: A 4X zoom is roughly equal to 38 to 140mm; 5X is about 38 to 190mm; and so on. Keep in mind, though, that a camera with an 8X or higher optical zoom is pretty sensitive, so you'll have to have a steady hand or a tripod to prevent blurry pictures.

**2 Megapixels.** Basically, the number of megapixels a camera's sensor has determines the extent to which you can enlarge your prints and, to a lesser extent, the quality of your pictures. A camera with 5MP or more will produce good, clear 8x10 prints, and 7MP or more will let you enlarge portions of your pictures, cropping out what you don't want, without losing image detail.

**3 Shooting modes/presets and other features.** With a point-and-shoot digital camera, you have some control over picture scenes. Most digital cameras let you select Auto so the camera makes all of the adjustments, or you can select preset modes, such as Beach or Snow (for bright-light settings with reflection) or Backlight (when the light is flooding in a window behind your subject). Look for additional features such as image stabilization, which compensates for unsteady hands; red-eye reduction; and photo effects, such as Watercolor or Sepia color options, that let you get creative.

**4 Size and weight.** To tote your camera to the zoo with your curious toddler or tuck it in a jacket pocket for your son's soccer game, you'll

probably want a portable, lightweight camera. The design of the camera is important to its portability. For instance, we like the Kodak EasyShare V705 (\$349.99; [www.kodak.com](http://www.kodak.com)), with its dual-lens system. This slim, compact camera weighs less than 5 ounces, so you can tuck it into a purse or pocket. We're also fond of the Kodak EasyShare Z710 (\$249.99) for its amazing specs, which include 7.1MP, a 10X optical zoom, and a 2-inch TFT LCD; however, its slightly bulky shape precludes slipping it in a pocket. If you're traveling and have room for a small camera case, though, the Z710 is a perfect choice.

**5 Memory.** When you budget for your camera, factor in the cost of a memory card—and make sure you know what kind of card your camera takes. On-board memory is usually in the 16 to 32MB range. A good-quality 8x10 image may take up 1MB, so without a memory card, you'll be able to take very few pictures. Additionally, you'll have to have a device, such as a computer, to offload the pictures to (or you'll have to erase them) before you can take more. A SanDisk 1GB Secure Digital Memory Card ([www.sandisk.com](http://www.sandisk.com)) runs \$44.99 at Best Buy, and a SanDisk 1GB Ultra II Compact-Flash Memory Card is \$49.99. **PG**

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BY KATHRYN DOLAN

# Digital Imaging Glossary



Confused about what certain terms on that camera box mean? Use this glossary to help decode the world of digital photography.

**aperture**—An iris-like diaphragm opening that can expand and contract the lens opening to let you control the amount of light that passes through it, thus affecting the exposure. The term “f-stop” is used interchangeably with aperture.

**burst mode**—Where the camera can take several shots (up to 10) consecutively, usually in one second.

**CCD**—Charge-coupled device, which is the camera’s image-sensing component. It converts light into energy that can be stored as digital data on your camera.

**depth of field**—The area of a photo that is in focus.

**digital zoom**—Magnifying an image digitally by cropping it and filling in the rest with interpolated pixels, thus degrading the quality. Even though the numbers seem impressive, never choose a camera based on digital zoom.

**f-stop**—See aperture. Smaller f-stop numbers mean a wider lens opening; larger f-stop numbers mean a narrower lens opening.

**ISO**—For digital cameras, the ISO setting measures the sensitivity to light (similar to how it does with film). Digital camera ISO settings, such as 200, 400, etc., should capture photos as if one were using film with such a speed.

Lower ISO settings mean you need more light, and vice versa.

**LCD**—The screen on the back of the camera that lets you see a live-action view of your subject, your photo after you’ve taken it, or both.

**lens**—The apparatus on the front of the camera that gathers and directs light towards the imaging device. In a digital camera, the lens probably has both an optical zoom and digital zoom.

**megapixel**—Approximately 1 million pixels. The higher the megapixels, the higher the resolution and the more you can crop, which means (in general) better-quality photos.

**memory card**—Because digital cameras have very little on-board memory, they need a flash memory card to store more than a dozen or so images. The type of memory card you need depends on your camera make and model. Some of the most popular memory cards are Secure Digital, MultiMediaCard, Compact Flash, and Sony Memory Sticks. In general, memory cards are quite small.

**noise**—Small statistical variations among pixels that lead to a (usually) minor distortion of color in a photo.

**optical zoom**—The ability to move the lens physically closer to your subject. With optical zoom, the higher the number (such as 5X or 10X), the better. When choosing a camera, always consider the optical zoom, not the digital zoom.

**resolution**—The number of pixels in an image. The higher the resolution,



the more detail and quality in a photo. Resolution is measured in a proportion (such as 2,272 x 1,704).

**shutter**—A mechanism that opens and closes to allow light to pass through the lens. You can usually control the shutter’s speed.

**shutter speed**—The length of time a camera’s shutter is open to let light through the lens to hit the sensor, which records the image. This is expressed in fractions of a second: for instance, a shutter speed of 1/250 means that the shutter speed is 1/250th of a second.

**viewfinder**—The small opening in the camera that the user looks through to frame a shot. Some digital cameras don’t have a viewfinder; instead, use the LCD to frame the shot.

**white balance**—Light levels are adjusted electronically to ensure whites (and thus other colors) are pure, leading to more lifelike color. White balance can usually be manually adjusted, too.



## Which Camera Is Best For You?



If you're a little confused about the most important features in a digital camera, you're not alone. In this chart, we compare features from select digital cameras available at Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)), and we also explain what these features mean. If that still has you cross-eyed, we recommend the models for certain lifestyles.

### Point & Shoot

What It Is	What It Means	Kodak EasyShare V705	Sony Cyber-shot DSC-N2	Casio Exilim EX-Z770
<b>Resolution</b>	In general, more pixels mean bigger, clearer prints	7.1MP	10.1MP	7.2MP
<b>Optical zoom</b>	Moves the lens physically closer to your subject	5X	3X	3X
<b>Size (height x width x depth) &amp; weight</b>	It's important for a camera to be comfortable to hold & use	2x4x0.8 inches; 4.4oz	3.8x2.4x0.9 inches; 5.5oz	2.4x3.7x0.4 inches; 4.5oz
<b>LCD size</b>	The LCD is the display on the back of the camera	2.5 inches	3 inches	2.8 inches
<b>Battery life</b>	Based on how many shots you can take on a single charge	150 images	300 images	200 images
<b>ISO</b>	Light sensitivity; the higher the ISO, the greater the ability to take photos in low-light situations	Auto; Manual: 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,000	Auto; Manual: 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,600	Auto; Manual: 50, 100, 200, 400, 800
<b>Perfect for</b>		Users who aren't quite ready for a D-SLR but have outgrown a point-and-shoot	Users who like to view, edit, and display photos on their camera instead of their PC	Shutterbugs who like taking photos outside
<b>Cooliest feature</b>		Dual-lens technology	3-inch LCD touchscreen	Casio's SuperBright LCD
<b>Best Buy price</b>		\$399.99	\$399.99	\$299.99



Kodak EasyShare V705



Sony Cyber-shot DSC-N2



Casio Exilim EX-Z770



Olympus Stylus 1000

## DSLRs

	Olympus Stylus 1000	Fujifilm Finepix F20	HP Photosmart R727	Canon Digital Rebel XTi	Nikon D40
	10MP	6.3MP	6.2MP	10.1MP	6.1MP
	3X	3X	3X	EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-22*	18-55mm f/3.5 - f/5.6 ED II AF-S DX Zoom-Nikkor lens*
	2.2x3.8x0.9 inches; 4.9oz	2.2x3.7x1.1 inches; 5.3oz	2.4x3.7x0.9 inches; 4.8oz	3.7x5x2.6 inches; 1.1lbs	2.5x5x3.7 inches; 1.1lbs
	2.5 inches	2.5 inches	2.5 inches	2.5 inches	2.5 inches
	280 images	300 images	240 images	300 images	470 images
	Auto; Manual: 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,600, 3,200	Auto; Manual: 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,600, 2,000	Auto; Manual: 100, 200, 400	Auto; Manual: 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,600	Auto; Manual: 200, 400, 800, 1,600
	Users who don't want to sacrifice function for form	First-time digital camera buyers	Busy parents who will keep the camera in a diaper bag or purse	Confident camera users experienced with using SLRs	A newbie to the D-SLR arena
	Digital image stabilization	Intelligent Flash	In-camera design gallery	Self-Cleaning System	The price—excellent for a D-SLR
	\$349.99	\$199.99	\$199.99	\$899.99	\$599.99

\*These two lenses are for D-SLR cameras, and thus, there's no established equivalent to optical zoom. Talk to your Best Buy Digital Imaging specialist for more information.



Fujifilm Finepix F20



HP Photosmart R727



Canon Digital Rebel XTi



Nikon D40

# Shop For A *Family Friendly* Computer

Desktop Or Laptop? PC Or Mac?  
We'll Help You Sort Through The Available Options

F

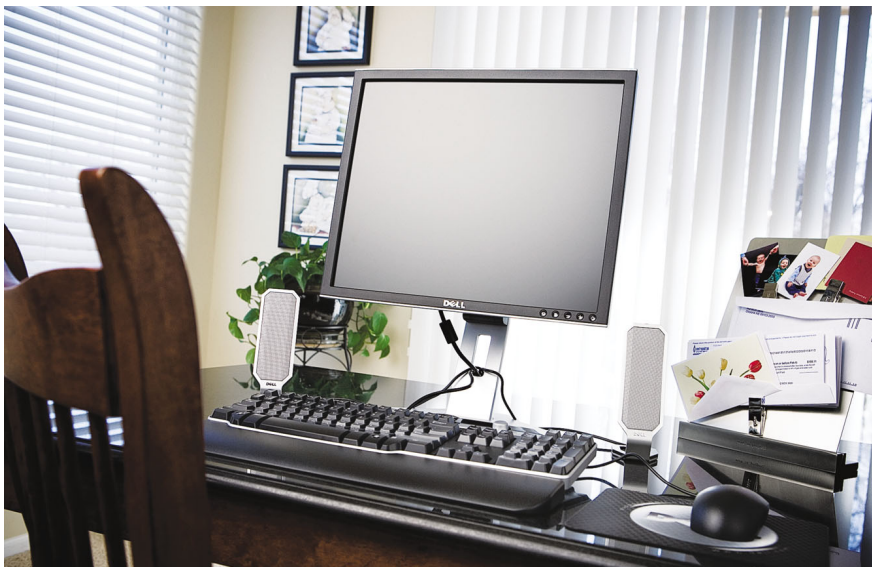
ive years ago, most families didn't even have a computer at home, and many of those who did only used it for the occasional email or document creation. Now, most families would find it hard to imagine getting through the day without at least a little screen time. In fact, we ask quite a lot of our computers. From downloading music, watching videos, and instant messaging to paying bills, checking the forecast, and reading news headlines, it's probably safe to say the family computer stays pretty busy around the clock.

If you're in the market for a new computer—whether it's an upgrade for your family's one-and-only or just a new addition to the network—now is a great time to buy. Advances in technology mean products just keep getting better,

and prices just keep dropping lower. What you end up buying will depend on your family's unique needs and wish list of features. But before you hit the stores, it's good to have an idea of what options are available.

To meet the varied and often substantial requests a busy family makes of its computer, the models on the market today are versatile and capable. Manufacturers, such as Gateway and Dell, make it easy to get just what you want by letting you fully customize their basic system options. If you don't feel confident enough to customize your own computer, you can just as easily pick out a prebuilt system that you found at your local consumer electronics store.

The cost will depend, of course, on how many goodies you want to pack into your system. If you're looking for a more basic computer that will work well as part of your family's network, you could probably get away with spending around \$500. Even at that level, you could expect to get a dual-core processor with a large hard drive and a substantial amount of memory. For example, Best Buy sells an HP Pavilion desktop with an AMD







Athlon 64 X2 dual-core processor, 1GB of SDRAM, a 200GB hard drive, and a DVD±RW/CD-RW drive for a fairly reasonable \$565.

But if you want one machine that can do it all, you'll likely have to spend between \$1,000 and \$1,500. At this price point, you'll be able to afford a high-end graphics card to properly render Windows' new OS, Vista, and a beautiful flat-screen with a built-in TV tuner. No matter which system you decide on, the newest member of your family is sure to be loved by all. **FG**

BY JENNIE SCHLUETER

## Windows Vista

Most PCs on the market now will come with some version of either Windows XP or Windows Vista. Vista is Microsoft's latest OS release, and it represents a pretty significant change from its predecessor, Windows XP.

Families who want the latest OS but prefer a relatively familiar environment will be happy with the Home Basic edition. This version offers a more secure computing experience and includes features such as new parental controls and warnings of potential hardware failures

to prevent data loss. The other three editions—Vista Home Premium, Vista Business, and Vista Ultimate—introduce users to the new Aero interface and offer even more new features and capabilities.

Look for the Vista Capable or Premium Ready PC logos when shopping for a computer that can handle Vista's relatively hefty hardware requirements. You can learn more about Windows Vista here: [www.microsoft.com/windowsvista](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista). ●

# The Best Type Of Computer For You

Will That Be For Here Or To Go?

**I**f you're in the market for a new computer, you have one major decision to make before you'll ever start to consider a particular brand: whether to go for a desktop or a notebook model. The decision is tougher than it used to be. Until fairly recently, most people regarded notebooks mainly as auxiliary computers, a scaled-down version of the main machine that could go to the coffee shop, on vacation, or back and forth to work.

No longer! Notebooks now have all the processing power and storage capacity that most users are likely to need, making them more viable as main machines in their own right. In fact, according to a 2006 study by technology research and consulting firm Gartner, in 2005, sales of notebooks began to surpass those of desktops.

That said, each type has advantages and disadvantages that may sway your decision.

## Desktop Computers

### Advantages

- When processing speed matters and may save you time (when editing video or graphics, for instance, or for video-intensive gameplay), the fastest desktops beat the fastest notebooks.
- It's usually easy to expand most desktop features and functions, with room for additional hard drives, DVD drives, PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) cards, memory, etc.
- Desktops are more durable than notebooks because their components don't need to be miniaturized for portability.

### Disadvantages

- Desktops tie you to a single location and, obviously, require their own designated work space.
- A desktop computer, along with its monitor, external keyboard and mouse, and other peripherals, demands a lot more space for setup and may require some rearranging to make room for it.

### Perfect For:

- Families who want a central computing workstation
- Users who need a variety of peripherals and other expansion options
- Gaming enthusiasts

## Models Of Note

### Apple iMac

\$999 (for 17-inch, 1.83GHz model) and up • [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

The iMac integrates a widescreen display directly into a slim processor case, so it's not only sleek but also it's more portable than other desktops.

### Dell Dimension E521

\$569 • [www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com)

If you need a solid PC that simply delivers the basics, this bargain from Dell (including a 15-inch LCD monitor) will fit the bill without setting you back much.

### Micro Express MicroFlex 66B

\$899 • [www.microexpress.net](http://www.microexpress.net)

This model easily handles such processor-intensive activities as video-editing, is highly expandable, and comes with a 5.1-channel audio system, making it a great choice for anyone seeking the sweet spot between performance and value.

### Systemax Sabre Intel Core 2 Extreme

\$3,499.99 • [www.systemaxpc.com](http://www.systemaxpc.com)

With lots of memory, two high-speed (10,000rpm) hard drives, a high-end graphics card, and surround-sound outputs, the Sabre is made for serious gaming action.

# Notebook Computers

## Advantages

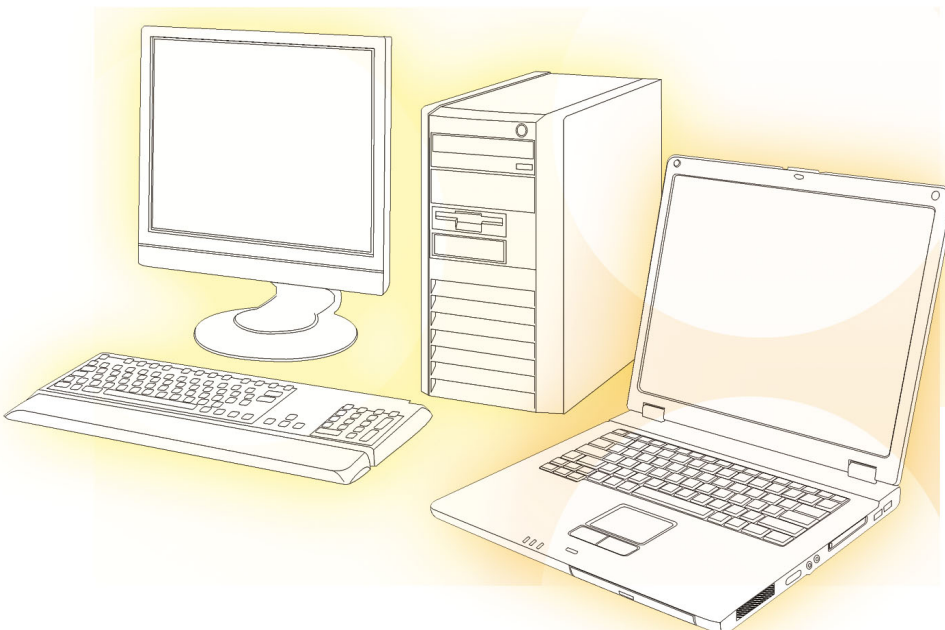
- You're free to roam from room to room or anywhere else you feel like taking your work, and you don't have to worry about shuttling files back and forth between the notebook and a home base machine.
- Notebooks can run for hours on a fully charged battery, letting you work where there are no electrical outlets, during power outages, etc.
- Many laptops are now equipped with a built-in wireless card (or can easily be upgraded to include one), so you can tap into high-speed Internet connections all over, and more hotspots are appearing all the time.

## Disadvantages

- Notebooks have a higher failure rate than desktops. According to the 2006 Gartner study cited earlier, notebooks fail at three times the rate of desktops within their first year and nearly twice the desktop rate within four years of use.
- Because components are smaller and packed so closely together, upgrades and repairs are usually more expensive and time-consuming.

## Perfect For:

- Students
- Frequent travelers
- Businesspeople on the move



## Models Of Note

### Apple MacBook

\$1,099 (13-inch, 1.83 GHz model) and up  
• [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

Now that Apple's entire computer line is based on Intel processors, the MacBook (along with the MacBook Pro) is the only notebook capable of running Mac OS X and Windows OSes.

### Dell Inspiron E1505

\$799 • [www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com)

This model provides a good value as a jack-of-all trades notebook PC that will be at home in just about any classroom or office.

### Lenovo ThinkPad T60p Mobile Workstation

\$1,713 • [www.lenovo.com](http://www.lenovo.com)

With the smaller 14.1-inch model weighing just 4.6 pounds, this is travel-friendly but doesn't skimp on power and features, including an integrated fingerprint reader for added security.

### Toshiba Qosmio G35-AV660

\$2,999.99 • [www.toshiba.com](http://www.toshiba.com)

It's expensive and tips the scale at 10 pounds, but the Qosmio delivers desktop power in a portable package. And with its HD DVD drive and HDMI output, it doubles as a high-def entertainment PC.

## A Logical Choice

Because of the sheer variety of things you can do with a computer, it will likely be the most versatile thing you ever buy. You'll want to consider how and where you'll be using that new machine and the accessories you may need to add and weigh the pros and cons of each type. Buying a computer isn't just a choice of hardware: It's a lifestyle decision, too. **FG**

BY BRIAN HODGE

# Mac vs. PC

## It's A Matter Of Taste & Practicality



For years, Macs have played the role of the hip, artistic son who always looks snazzy but also puts a hefty price tag on his creations and doesn't always play well with others. The PC has been the square father who runs a bit unstably sometimes and needs a lot of attention where security is concerned, but he still has far more friends making hardware and software for him, and he's better at

gaming. Oh yeah, Dad's right-hand man is the ubiquitous Windows. In truth, though, both platforms have more in common than ever. Both use Intel processors, and Macs can actually run Windows via Apple's free Boot Camp utility. Really, whether you buy a Mac or PC depends a lot on your personality and which platform those around you are using. **EG**

BY BLAINE A. FLAMIG

## Mac

### Advantages

- **Better out of the box.** Apple's slogan is "it just works," and you'll find plenty of teachers and children who swear by Mac OS X, Apple's counter to Windows. Multimedia lovers rave about iLife '06, the wide-ranging software suite Apple bundles with new Macs. Web addicts love the integration of the built-in iSight Web camera with the Safari browser.
- **Security.** Apple isn't shy about pointing out its platform is far more secure than Windows. Most virus- and spyware-related statistics bear this out, although far more people use Windows than Mac OS X. Still, a Windows machine generally requires running several security programs made by different companies. Mac requires far less effort.
- **Design.** Few companies cause as much buzz as Apple each time it releases something new. The attention is well-deserved; the funky, ultra-modern iMac is proof of this. To its credit, Apple has continually made Macs appealing, both functionally and aesthetically.

### Disadvantages

- **Poor third-party support.** Apple tends to keep its business in-house. For Macs, this means Apple develops its own OS and software and manufactures its own hardware. For buyers, this means fewer companies make Mac hardware and software than for the PC.
- **Expensive.** Pricing on Macs has become friendlier in recent years, but you'll still pay more for a Mac than a comparable PC. Factor in iLife, iSight, less security-related costs, and a Mac support community, and things start to even out.

### Perfect For:

- DVD and digital camera lovers
- Illustrators/graphic artists
- Students
- Musicians
- Podcasters/videocasters

## Models Of Note

**iMac:** Starting at \$999 and running an Intel Core 2 Duo processor at up to 2.33GHz, the iMac offers up dual-processing ability in a fetching body up to 24 inches wide.

**Mac mini:** At just 6.5 inches wide and deep and 2 inches tall, the Mac mini (\$599 and up) runs a slower Intel Core Duo CPU. Conveniently, the mini will work with your old PC or Mac keyboards, mice, and monitors.

**MacBook and MacBook Pro:** If you're going mobile, the MacBook (\$1,099 and up) and MacBook Pro are Apple's handsome options. The MacBook has a 2GHz dual processor, a built-in Ethernet connector, and integrated Bluetooth and 54Mbps AirPort Extreme for wireless connectivity.



# PC

## Advantages

- **Upgradeability.** Maybe the PC's best feature is its vast upgrading options, especially in swapping out old hardware for new. Point to any PC component, and there's a smaller market segment for it full of companies trying to outdo each other.
- **Windows.** Workers in all walks of life will tell you that Windows rules the landscape with its Office suite, networking software, and other business apps. With so many banks, coffee shops, hospitals, restaurants, car garages, etc. relying on Windows, the PC has an inherent advantage over the Mac.
- **Gaming and productivity.** Hardware-savvy gamers live and die by the PC for its superior handling of modern, video-intensive games. Number crunchers, business owners, and checkbook balancers get more software choices and support on the PC for spreadsheet, database, networking, financial, and other functions.

## Disadvantages

- **Security.** Windows is a bigger target than Mac OS X, so more bad guys try to expose it. If you buy a PC, expect to stay on top of antivirus and antispyware software, a firewall, Windows Updates, and other security tasks.
- **Instability.** Entire books and magazines have been devoted to Windows' errors, buggy behavior, crashes, incompatibilities, and other negatives. If you've ever had to reinstall Windows, you know the pain.

## Perfect For:

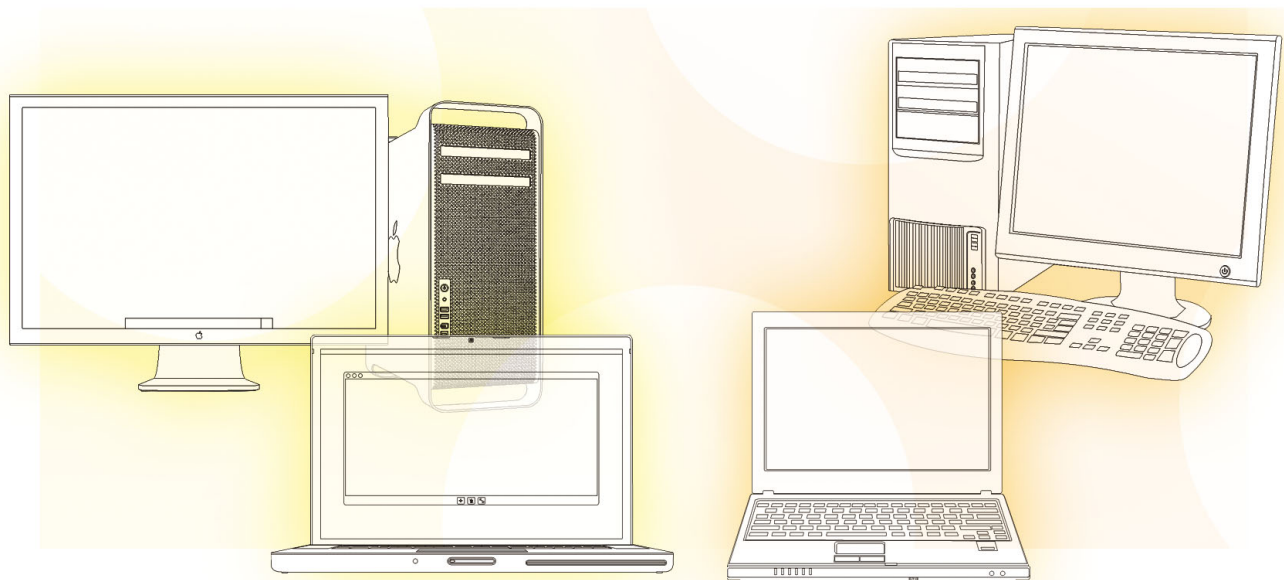
- Gamers
- Office workers
- Video editing/CAD/engineering
- Upgraders/modders

## Models Of Note

**HP Pavilion line:** HP's bare-bones Pavilion desktop line starts at a friendly \$299.99, which gets you the basics, and spans up past \$899, which gets you a good midrange PC that can handle just about anything but especially demanding apps.

**Gateway FX530 line:** Starting at \$1,199.99 moving up to \$5,000, Gateway's FX530 lines gives you great gaming and video power, sharp looks, and a 24-inch HD widescreen display.

**Toshiba Satellite notebook line:** Toshiba is already shipping higher-end Satellites (starting at \$2,399.99) with Vista and Intel Core 2 Duo processors. Lower-end models running Windows XP start at \$849.15.



# How Much & Why?

## The Right Stuff For Your New Computer



ou've resolved to buy a new computer, and you're looking forward to a speedier system than your last one.

Most new PCs come with Windows Vista, however, and Vista requires a lot more storage space and processing power than Windows XP. What specs should your new computer have?

(Because Apple sells its OS X operating system on its own computers, parts of this article won't apply to Mac buyers.)

**RAM.** Random-access memory offers fast, temporary storage for the applications and files you're using at the moment. If your new computer has too little RAM, it will be forced to store some of the current data on the hard drive, which will make your PC feel *much* slower.

For Vista, Microsoft considers 512MB the bare minimum. Vista runs best with lots of memory, though, so realistically you'll want 1GB or more.

**Processor speed.** Microsoft recommends at least an 800MHz processor, with a 1GHz CPU offering a better experience. Our take is that just about any computer on the shelves will have a faster processor than that, so don't worry overmuch about it. Buy a PC with the speediest AMD Athlon X2 or Intel Core 2 Duo you can afford, as Vista will make good use of their dual-core (double processor) nature.

Laptops are different. All else being equal, a faster processor will use up

your battery power far more quickly than a slower one. Look up the laptop manufacturer's estimated battery life before you choose a fast notebook over a slower one. If battery life is your main concern, be aware that Windows XP should run longer on a charge than Vista on a given laptop because Vista uses more processing resources.

There is a whole host of other figures associated with CPU speeds, such as bus speeds and cache sizes. The higher those figures are, the better.

**Hard drive space.** Most desktops sold today come with 160GB or larger hard drives, which is enough for one typical user even in this age of digital photos, video clips, and music collections. If someone else will be using your computer, too (especially someone who plays video games), opt for a 250GB or larger drive.

In a notebook, 80GB or 100GB will stand you in good stead. If you buy a laptop with a smaller drive, you may regret it later as it starts to run out of room.

**Monitor size.** Screen size is really a matter of personal preference, but we vote for at least a 19-inch display (measured diagonally) with a widescreen (16:9) aspect ratio. Note that if you have a small workspace, there may not be enough distance between your eyes and a larger monitor for comfortable viewing.

Because laptops have integrated screens, you'll want to look at a few models in person before committing to a certain display size. The larger the screen, the larger the notebook's physical size, not to mention its weight. Bigger displays decrease notebooks' battery life, too. **FC**

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BY MARTY SEMS



# Bundle It & Save

Trim The Price Of A New PC With A Packaged System

**B**uying a desktop computer system for the family requires a balancing act: You have to weigh your computing needs against an acceptable price. Ask this: How will family members use the computer? Is it for digital photo editing? Home entertainment? Homework? Games? All of the above?

Building your PC component by component directly from a manufacturer is one way to match hardware with tasks. Marc Diana, product marketing manager for Alienware's desktop systems, says if you buy a PC this way, you should focus on the core of a system—such as processor speed, hard drive space, and graphics card. "If you can play a game on a PC, which is just about the most demanding thing you can do on a computer, you can do anything with it," Diana says.

## No Assembly Required

You don't have to assemble a system component by component, though. PC manufacturers offer bundles that you can customize. For example, the Area-51 7500 system from Alienware (starting at \$2,399; [www.alienware.com](http://www.alienware.com)) offers four choices of processors alone.

Diana warns about sacrificing core computing power for "optimal savings." Still, he admits that consumers can enjoy significant savings if they buy a bundled system through a retailer, such as Best Buy. These bundles contain everything you need—the tower, monitor, keyboard, mouse, and color printer—at prices hundreds of dollars lower than if you select the components separately.

## Good Deals At Best Buy

These PC bundles recently offered in Best Buy stores were advertised at prices that represented instant savings of at least \$200 off regular store prices.

### Compaq

- Intel Pentium D Processor 820
- 17-inch flat-screen CRT monitor
- 250GB hard drive
- 1,024MB DDR2 memory
- DVD/CD drive with LightScribe disc-labeling technology
- ATI Radeon Xpress 2000 graphics card
- 9-in-1 media card reader
- Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 (Windows Vista Premium ready)
- Canon color printer

**\$549.97**

Upgrade to 15-inch LCD flat-panel monitor for \$70

### Gateway

- AMD Athlon 64 X2 dual-core processor 4200+
- 17-inch LCD flat-panel monitor
- 250GB hard drive
- 2,048MB DDR2 memory
- DVD/CD drive
- Nvidia GeForce 6100 graphics card
- Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 (Windows Vista Premium ready)
- Canon color printer

**\$749.97**

Upgrade to 19-inch LCD flat-panel widescreen monitor for \$30

PC bundles from retailers aren't customizable, but you may be able to upgrade some components, such as the monitor. An upgrade may involve a bigger monitor or faster processor. (See the "Good Deals At Best Buy" sidebar.)

An eMachines bundle recently featured at Best Buy for \$379.97 included an Intel Celeron D Processor, a 17-inch monitor, and Canon color printer. The PC had no OS and only a 120GB hard drive. For an additional \$50, you could bump up to an Intel Pentium 4 processor, Windows XP Media Center Edition, a 160GB hard drive, and 9-in-1 media card reader.

Although not always the case, PC bundles might be close-out

models or include close-out components, so read the fine print. Good deals go fast, and rain checks may not apply. **FG**

BY RACHEL DEROWITSCH

## Accessory

True Seating 4-Way Foldable Floor Mat  
\$21.99 • [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)

Regardless of whether you have a carpeted or hardwood floor in your home office, you'll probably want a floor mat under your office chair. Chairs on rollers don't move especially well on carpeted surfaces, not to mention the damage they can do to the carpet, and chairs on rollers will scrape and scratch a hardwood surface.





# Software For Your New PC

Protection, Productivity & More



**T**here are many simple pleasures in life, and bringing home a new computer has to be one of them. There, wrapped up in one tidy bundle, is the promise of better things to come. No more air-blowing the cookie crumbs out of the keyboard or trying to read around the soda splatters on your monitor. Never again will you suffer from program bloat or inexplicable glitches. At least that's what you tell yourself as you put your new computer together.

It's only later when you sit down to your new purchase that you realize your

dream may be tougher to achieve than you thought. How do you keep this new computer from ending up like the old one? Sure, you can quit eating lunch at your keyboard. And it would help to be careful about downloading every program that looks interesting or useful. But most of all, you'll want to arm your computer with protective software. We'll take a look at some of your options.

## It's In There

Almost any computer you buy today will include some software. You'll generally get the most current OS (operating

system), some sort of productivity software for general document creation, and a limited or trial version of an antivirus or security program. The base Dell Dimension E520, for example, comes with Windows XP Media Center 2005 Edition, Norton Internet Security 2006, and Microsoft Works 8. Computers at a lower price point (\$500 to \$900) will offer less than computers in the \$1,000 to \$1,500 range.

Included software is great, but it's important to remember that you will need more than these offerings to keep your PC safe and enjoy all your computer is capable of. At the very least, you'll want to invest in a quality antivirus/security suite.

## Safe Computing

There are several software options for keeping your PC safe from viruses and spyware, the risk of data loss, and other computing catastrophes.

**Symantec ([www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)).** Home and home office users will get the most out of the company's Norton line of products, which includes the Internet Security program mentioned above. This is a good product for protecting you from threats you'll encounter online. But if you're looking for something with a broader range of capabilities, try Norton SystemWorks. The Standard (\$69) and Premier Editions (\$99) include a little bit of everything you need to keep your new investment running

Another thing to note is that you can run as many antispysware programs on your computer as you want but only one antivirus program at a time.

safely and smoothly, including protection from viruses, spyware, accidental deletions, and more.

**Webroot ([www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)).** Another good option is Spy Sweeper (\$29). Whether you have spyware on your computer already and want to get rid of it or you simply want to protect yourself from future infections, Spy Sweeper can help. Spy Sweeper with Antivirus (\$39) offers the added benefit of protecting your computer from the threat posed by viruses. The program checks for updated virus definitions daily to keep your computer safe from new nasties. Not sure you need it? Try a free Spy Sweeper scan of your computer and find out.

**McAfee ([www.mcafee.com](http://www.mcafee.com)).** Depending on how much coverage you want, McAfee has products with varying degrees of protection. SiteAdvisor Plus (\$19) protects you while surfing by blocking viruses, adware, spyware, and similar threats and offering safety ratings for sites you visit. VirusScan Plus (\$39) features antivirus and antispysware components, as well as firewall protection. The Internet Security Suite (\$49) adds parental controls; protection from phishing, spam, and identity theft; backup and restoration features; and more.

Keep in mind that most brands of protection software (including the ones listed here) require a yearly subscription fee. This means that the upfront cost of the software is also what you'll have to

pay each year to continue to receive updates on the latest threats. Some companies offer discounts if you buy a two-year subscription at the time of the initial purchase. Another thing to note is that you can run as many antispysware programs on your computer as you want but only one antivirus program at a time.

Investing a little money in quality software now can save you a lot of time and heartache later. Unfortunately, we can't help you keep the cookie crumbs out of your keyboard. **FC**

BY JENNIE SCHLUETER

## Tip

April is tax month, so be prepared.

As April 15 draws ever nearer, don't forget about software to help prepare and file your taxes. One reason to buy new tax software each year is that tax laws change, and tax programs, such as TurboTax (price varies; [turbotax.intuit.com](http://turbotax.intuit.com)), incorporate the latest changes. If you're shopping for a program, look for one that lets you prepare both your federal and state returns. This year, there are 37 states that let you file your returns electronically, too. For access to printable forms, answers to questions about e-filing, and much more, visit the IRS' Web site ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov))



## Just For Fun

Computers allow just about anyone to successfully edit his or her own photos and videos. There are lots of software options to accomplish this, but we especially like the programs from Roxio and Adobe.

The Roxio PhotoSuite 8 (\$29) is a good option for beginning editors or someone who just wants an affordable, straightforward photo editor. Professional video editors may find the Roxio Easy Media Creator 9 Suite (\$79) lacking in some of the more advanced tools, but you can't beat this

familiar name for a quality, go-to video editor.

Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0 (\$99) costs quite a bit more than the Roxio photo editor, but users can expect more capabilities here. For all of its features, though, this robust product is still easy to use. Hard-core video editors will be happy with the number of editing options available in Adobe Premiere Elements 3.0 (\$99), and newbies will find the new interface more manageable than previous versions. ●



## Tips

### Furniture For Your PC

#### Family Computing

If you have children who use the family PC, you may want to incorporate it into your living space, so you can supervise their computing activities. Armoires, such as the Antiqued White Computer Armoire from Sauder (\$361.99; [www.sauder.com](http://www.sauder.com)), let you slide in the keyboard tray and close the doors when the kids are finished playing their games, which helps the computer and its accoutrements blend more easily into a room. The Sauder Writing Desk (\$280.99), also in Antiqued White, is a neat and trim table that won't overwhelm a room, either.

#### Dedicated Room

With a home office for your computer, you may want a traditional-looking desk with matching furniture. With the Sauder Laurel Inn Executive Desk in River Oak finish (\$556.99), you can also buy its matching Lateral File (\$195.99) for storing paper files and its Hutch With Glass Doors (\$169.99) to accommodate books.

For more contemporary office furnishings, take a look at Ballard Designs ([www.ballarddesigns.com](http://www.ballarddesigns.com)) and LaDifférence ([www.ladiff.com](http://www.ladiff.com)). For a striking room, we liked Cappa by Dencon (at LaDifférence), starting at \$2,129, for desks, returns, shelves, file cabinets, bookcases, pull-up chairs, and more.

#### Confined Spaces

For a child's bedroom or a dorm room, consider a self-contained shelf unit, such as the funky-looking chrome and glass Computer Desk (#22781033; \$259.95; [www.nfm.com](http://www.nfm.com)) from Nebraska Furniture Mart. Two of the unit's legs are on wheels so you can easily move it if necessary. It has an adjustable bottom shelf for a tower or printer; a dropped keyboard/mouse shelf that tucks under the primary desk area; and an overhead shelf for a scanner, iPod dock, and speakers. The metal iGo iMac G5 Desk (\$339.99; [www.welovemacs.com](http://www.welovemacs.com)) has a

halo lamp, four wheels for easy portability, a turntable so you can find an optimal viewing angle, and a digital hub for your iPod or digital camera.



#### Ever On The Go

You may not need a dedicated room or desk if your primary computer is a laptop. With a laptop, it's easy to set up at the kitchen table or even on your lap in front of the TV. For a bit more support, you can find props, platforms, and stands that'll create a workspace where you are. The APC Notebook Stand with 4-port USB 2.0 Hub (\$79.99; [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)) lets you prop up, tilt, and swivel your laptop so you can work



comfortably even at a coffee table. If you'd rather relax in an easy chair, the Studio RTA Laptop/Reading Cart (\$94.99; [www.safecomputing.com](http://www.safecomputing.com)) is available in deep cherry, light cherry, or oak, and you

can adjust the height to 34.5 inches and tilt the work surface 90 degrees.

#### A Place To Park

If you give your daughter a computer desk, she may want a chair to go with it. We found affordable chairs, such as the True Seating Lane Leather Executive Office Chair (\$109.99; [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)), with its padded arm rests and adjustable height and tilt. We found interesting-looking chairs, such as the Scoop

Stool by Turnstone (\$199; [store.steelcase.com](http://store.steelcase.com)), which nicely complements shelf-style desks. And we found ergonomic, high-backed leather chairs, such as the Steelcase Leap (\$1,299), which is well-suited to a traditional office. **FG**



BY KATHRYN DOLAN





Great theater deserves a great setting.

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Sanus Natural Furniture creates a home entertainment setting that's as fresh as the dawn. Solid Grade A hardwoods are matched with tempered glass. A concealed wire management system keeps the lines uncluttered. Choose maple, cherry, mocha or black lacquer. See Sanus Natural Furniture and much more at [www.sanus.com](http://www.sanus.com). It's scenery worth seeing.

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# Leave It To The PC Pros

Best Buy's  Can Get It Done

**T**oday's computers can handle your entertainment, financial, shopping, communication, and business needs like never before. But from the moment you power on your new PC, you'll have to fight spyware, viruses, and online predators; troubleshoot and repair error messages; configure new and old hardware and software; and regularly install updates and patches. Aren't computers great?

## Send In The Geeks

Like g-men with pocket protectors, the agents of Best Buy's Geek Squad ([www.bestbuy.com/geeksquad](http://www.bestbuy.com/geeksquad)) are there to handle all of your PC setup, repair, and installation needs.

**New PC setup and security.** The Geek Squad agents can streamline your system with over 100 in-depth tweaks, install and configure security software and other software updates, get rid of unnecessary software that comes preloaded on

your computer, create a restore CD, and even offer secure online storage.

**Repairs and upgrades.** Best Buy's team can also repair locks, crashes, and poor performance. The Geek Squad's most basic offering includes software fixes, virus and spyware removal, and general cleaning. You can also upgrade to get security and privacy software installed and configured. You can even hire the Geek Squad to upgrade your operating system.

**Wireless networking.** If you want to communicate more efficiently among multiple computers, the Geek Squad can help you with that, too, as well as with setting up a PC network in your home; connecting two network-capable devices (such as gaming consoles,

computers, print servers, and more); and even with securing your wireless network.

**Data protection.** If you have data you just can't lose (and we all do), the Geek Squad offers both a one-time backup service and an automated backup service. The squad can clean and remove sensitive files from a hard drive you're planning to sell or discard.

## Who You Gonna Call?

Once you've made the decision to buy a new PC, you aren't on your own to keep it working. Just call your friendly local Geek. **FG**

BY ANDREW LEIBMAN

## Available Services

**I**f it involves your computer, Best Buy's Geek Squad can help. Here's a list of the computer services your local Geek Squad agents can sort out. And they even make house calls.

- Set up and secure your computer
- Perform repairs and upgrades
- Protect and save your data
- À la carte services

## Price Breakdown

**T**o get your PC in tip-top shape, Best Buy's Geek Squad offers a range of services that are guaranteed to help you get the most out of your computer.

- Standard Security and Performance Package: \$129 (in-store); \$229 (in-home)
- Advanced Security and Performance: \$149 (in-store); \$249 (in-home)
- Premium Security and Performance: \$199 (in-store); \$299 (in-home)
- Advanced Diagnostic and Repair: \$199 (in-store); \$249 (in-home)
- Advanced Diagnostic, Repair, and Prevention: \$299 (in-store); \$349 (in-home)
- Operating System Upgrade (software not included): \$129 (in-store); \$249 (in-home)
- Network Installation (two devices or computers): \$159 (in-home)
- Single PC Networking Installation: \$89 (in-home)
- Wireless Security Setup: \$59 (in-home); \$49 (remote)
- One-Time Data Backup/Transfer: \$99 (in-store); \$229 (in-home)
- Automated Data Backup: \$129 (in-store); \$249 (in-home)
- Clean and Remove: \$59 (in-store)

COMPILED BY KATHRYN DOLAN

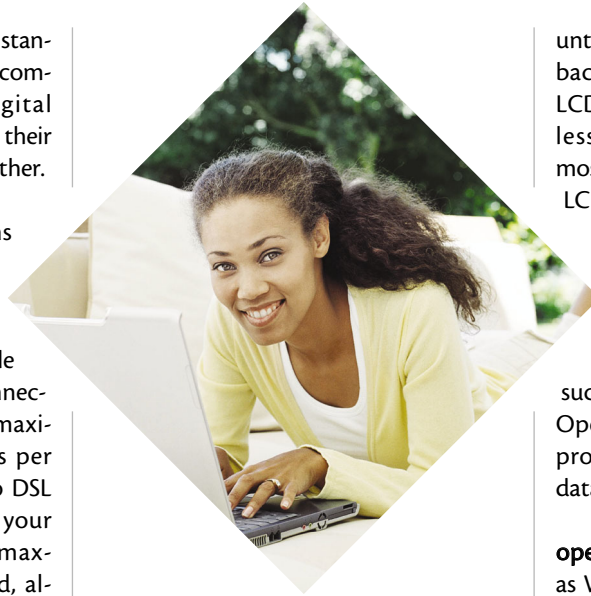
# Glossary Of Computing Terms

**Bluetooth**—A short-range wireless standard that connects devices, such as computers, printers, PDAs, and digital cameras, and allows the devices and their users to communicate with one another.

**broadband**—Network connections that transmit data at high speeds. Consumers have a few options for accessing the Internet via a broadband connection. If your cable company offers it, you can get connections at speeds with theoretical maximums of 8 to 11Mbps (megabits per second). You can also subscribe to DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) through your phone company; DSL supports maximum speeds of 3 to 5Mbps. And, although not widely available, some power companies are exploring the possibility of offering high-speed Internet access to their customers, as well.

**CRT (cathode-ray tube)**—An older display technology for TVs and computer monitors that features an electron gun lighting up phosphor dots that line the inside of a glass tube. When the phosphors are lit, they display the on-screen image. CRTs consume a lot of power and are heavy and bulky. Additionally, CRTs are an analog technology, so although many CRTs support digital signals, they degrade when converted to analog.

**dual-core processor**—This integrated circuit, which controls the computer, features two processors, each with its own cache, on a single die or chassis. In a dual-core configuration, the operating system has two processors to handle instructions, speeding up the computer and its ability to multitask.



**Ethernet**—A widely used LAN (local-area network) protocol in which computers and networks are physically linked.

**firewall**—Hardware or software that limits access by a network or another outside source to your computer; it also may limit your computer's access to the network. These security measures are designed to protect your computer from outsiders who'd like to exploit it in some way. By the same token, firewalls may prevent infected files on your computer from accessing the larger network and spreading the problem to other users.

**LAN (local-area network)**—A group of computers that are physically connected so they can communicate with one another and share information.

**LCD**—This digital display technology sandwiches liquid crystals between thin sheets of glass. The crystals twist and

untwist to allow and block light from a backlight, forming the images you see. LCDs are thinner, lighter, and consume less power than CRTs. Initially used mostly in notebook PCs, you'll now find LCD TVs and computer monitors, as well as LCD screens on digital cameras, cell phones, portable DVD players, and PDAs among others.

**office suite**—Productivity software, such as Microsoft Office, StarOffice, and Open Office, that often includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, database, and financial components.

**operating system**—The software, such as Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Mac OS X, that controls a computer and its peripherals and serves as the primary interface for the users.

**processor**—Also known as a microprocessor or the CPU (central processing unit), this integrated circuit controls the computer.

**RAM**—Random-access memory is a standard type of memory that's read from and written to by the CPU and hardware.

**upgradeable**—This refers to the ability to add or swap out hardware to boost a computer's performance, increase its speed, or replace a defective or obsolete device or component. For instance, you may wish to add more memory; replace an old CRT with a new, widescreen LCD display; or swap out an older graphics card for a new one that features an ATSC TV tuner so you can watch digital TV on your computer. Look for a computer with expansion slots or empty bays.

## Which Notebook Computer Is Best For You?

A notebook computer is a pretty big purchase for most people, and it's usually a bit overwhelming, too. This chart compares the features and specs from several models available at Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)) and recommends models based on certain lifestyles.



What It Is	What It Means	HP Pavilion dv9208nr	Compaq Presario 430 C501NR	Toshiba Satellite U205-S5057
<b>Operating system</b>	The software (usually Windows or Mac OS X) that controls your computer	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Basic	Windows Vista Home Premium
<b>Processor</b>	The chip that controls the computer (in general, the bigger the number, the better)	1.6GHz AMD Athlon 64 X2	1.73GHz Intel Celeron M 430	1.66GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile T5500
<b>Hard drive size</b>	How much the information the computer can hold	120GB	80GB	160GB
<b>Optical drives</b>	Drives that can read and write discs such as CD-Rs, DVD-RWs, or HD DVDs	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW with LightScribe	DVD-ROM/CD-RW	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW
<b>RAM</b>	Memory that is read from and written to by the processor and hardware. The more, the better.	1GB PC2-4200 DDR2	512MB PC2-4200 DDR2	1GB PC-4200 DDR2 SDRAM
<b>Screen size</b>	The diagonal measurement of the notebook's screen	17 inches	15.4 inches	12.1 inches
<b>Media card reader</b>	A slot that lets you use media cards without a separate peripheral	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Cooler feature</b>		LightScribe direct-disc labeling	Hi-def LCD	Fingerprint reader
<b>Perfect for</b>		Entertainment buffs looking for a desktop replacement	College students or anyone on a budget	Road warriors
<b>Best Buy price</b>		\$1,049.99	\$599.99	\$1,299.99



HP Pavilion dv9208nr



Compaq Presario 430 C501NR



Toshiba Satellite U205-S5057



Sony VAIO VGN-FE880E/H

	Sony VAIO VGN-FE880E/H	Gateway MT6821	Apple MacBook MA700LL/A	Apple MacBook Pro MA611LL/A	Samsung Ultra Mobile PC Q1
	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger	Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger	Windows XP Tablet PC
	1.66GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile	1.6GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile	2GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile	2.33GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile	900MHz Intel Celeron M ULV
	160GB	160GB	80GB	160GB	40GB
	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	None
	2GB PC2-5300 DDR2	2GB PC4200 DDR2	1GB PC2-5300 DDR2 SDRAM	2GB PC2-5300 DDR2 SDRAM	512MB DDR2
	15.4 inches	15.4 inches	13.3 inches	17 inches	7 inches
	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Built-in Web camera	Free Lexmark X1270 printer when purchased together	Loaded with software	iSight Web cam	Size—it's tiny but full-featured
	Users who like to stay connected to family & friends	A home office	Shutterbugs and amateur video editors	Those looking for a robust, full-featured system that can grow with them	Users who like to stay connected on the road without extra bulk
	\$1,399.99	\$949.99	\$1,299	\$2,799	\$999.99



Gateway MT6821



Apple MacBook MA700LL/A



Apple MacBook Pro MA611LL/A



Samsung Ultra Mobile PC Q1



# Wireless Shopping Tips

## Select A Cell Phone Service Plan

BY TARA SIMMONS



our cell phone can help you connect to business associates, friends, and family or contact help in an emergency. Your service plan fees are likely a permanent part of your budget, which is why selecting a cell phone service plan that's right for you is an important task. Here are some items to keep in mind when shopping around for a new plan.

Think about what time of day you'll use your phone. Conventional plans (with a flat monthly fee) have varying amounts of minutes allotted to daytime or nighttime and weekend use. So, if you frequently use your cell phone to make business calls, you'll need a plan that allows for heavy daytime usage. Many companies offer pay-as-you-go plans that let you buy varying amounts of minutes without signing a contract. This may be a fit for you if your cell phone use varies greatly from month to month.

Along with considering when you'll use your cell phone, consider how you'll use it. Will you need to browse the Web or send and receive emails or text messages? If so, you'll want to figure in the cost of these services. If not, look for a plan that has only the basics (for instance, caller ID, call waiting, and voicemail).

If you're looking for a new service provider, it's also a good time to look for a new cell phone. Most companies offer deep discounts on new cell phones when you sign a contract with them. Although we don't recommend basing your decision on a service provider solely on the phones available, remember that some phones are only offered through one

company. Shop around for several models you like and compare service plan options among the companies that offer those models.

We can't help reminding you to read the paperwork before signing a contract. Clarify how long the contract is and whether there are activation fees, termination penalties, or additional monthly charges. Also, take note of whether you have a trial period during which you can change providers without a fee.

Thoroughly research the coverage area of a potential provider. Coverage maps are provided in stores, or you can usually find these maps on a company's Web site. Ask around for real-life testimonials, too. See if your neighbors or family members living in the area are satisfied with the coverage of their providers.

If you have family members living with you, consider whether they will need their own cell phones. Putting two or more phones on a family plan is usually less expensive than having separate plans and contracts for each person. It's also easier to pay one bill each month and remember when one contract expires instead of three.

### SHOPPING CHECKLIST

#### ☐ When will you use your cell phone?

- ☐ Mostly during the day.
- ☐ Usually at night or on weekends.

#### ☐ What features will you need?

- ☐ Caller ID
- ☐ Call waiting
- ☐ Voicemail
- ☐ Text-messaging capabilities
- ☐ Internet access
- ☐ Camera

#### ☐ Does this provider offer a cell phone model you like?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

#### ☐ Things to look for in the contract:

- ☐ Length of contract
- ☐ Activation fees
- ☐ Termination fees
- ☐ Additional monthly fees
- ☐ Trial period
- ☐ Can you change plans?

#### ☐ Does the company offer adequate coverage in places where you will spend most of your time?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

CUT HERE

# The Many Faces Of The iPod

## So Much More Than A Music Player



Could anyone who had a hand in developing, constructing, and bringing the iPod to life ever have foreseen how many inventive ways people would find to use it? If all you're doing with your player is listening to music through earbuds, you're missing the big picture. The following are just a few ways to spread your own iPod's wings. **FG**

BY BLAINE A. FLAMIG



Otterbox iPod  
2G nano case  
\$39.95  
[www.otterbox.com](http://www.otterbox.com)

### iDriving

Those of us who remember trekking to and from work with only AM/FM radio and cassette tapes to entertain us know how far we've come. Anyone who's been behind the wheel with an iPod and FM transmitter riding shotgun can attest to that. Configuring an iPod and transmitter usually only requires connecting a few cables and dialing the car radio to the right frequency. When beaming tunes over radio waves gets old, slide over to the passenger seat and watch those "Studio 60" episodes from iTunes on your video iPod. For really long drives, pass the time by flipping the digital pages of an audio book, although it's a good backup to have a car adapter on hand to transfer juice from your car to iPod. Adapters are plentiful, including models that double as docks and transmitters.

#### Harman Kardon Drive+Play 2

[www.harmankardon.com](http://www.harmankardon.com)

Set for a spring release at \$399.99, this pricey but amazing transmitter comes with a video screen and wireless control.



#### Kensington RDS FM Transmitter/Car Charger

\$79.99 • [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)

This transmitter/charger displays song and artist data on your car stereo's display.



#### DLO Auto Charger

\$19.99 • [www.dlo.com](http://www.dlo.com)

A basic but affordable and reliable charger.



## iCooking

Nothing spices up the dinner-time cooking routine like popping your iPod into a nearby dock for a little company. Especially relevant for kitchen dwellers is the plentiful supply of free podcasts at iTunes covering all things cooking, including recipes, tips, and reviews. Download a couple podcasts of interest, insert your iPod into a dock with speakers, and listen while you're cooking. iPods can also help set the mood before, during, and after dinner via a wireless speaker system that beams tunes to nearly any room in your house or even out to the patio, if that's where the evening takes you. Heck, even a little after-dinner karaoke isn't off-limits.



### Creative Xdock Wireless

\$300 • [www.creative.com](http://www.creative.com)

Released in March, the Xdock wirelessly pumps music up to 100 feet to the wireless Creative X-Fi speakers in Xtreme Fidelity, which Creative says surpasses CD quality.

### Belkin Bluetooth Dock Adapter For iPod

\$129.99 • [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)

Just attach the included Bluetooth adapter to your iPod and wirelessly control the music it streams to the dock's speakers.



### Griffin Technology iKaraoke

\$50 • [www.griffintechnology.com](http://www.griffintechnology.com)

Plug in the iKaraoke's microphone and let your dinner party guests start crooning.



## iSwimming

Imagine heading to the pool for a quick workout, slipping on your bathing suit, dipping your toes in the shallow end to check the temp, and jumping in. With your iPod. On purpose. Noooo! Actually, yes. Although it takes a leap of faith to trust any product to safely protect your musical compadre against the forces of water (not to mention bringing *yourself* to actually submerge it in the wet stuff), there are a surprising number of water-related iPod options, including waterproof cases and headphones for listening to tunes while you're swimming, wading in the ocean, or snorkeling.



### Otterbox iPod 2nd Generation nano case

\$39.95 • [www.otterbox.com](http://www.otterbox.com)

Waterproof to 3 feet deep, Otterbox's cases include a thin membrane to protect the Click Wheel and clip to manage your underwater headphone cords.

### H2O Audio Headphones

\$39.99 • [www.h2oaudio.com](http://www.h2oaudio.com)

Bring the underwater noise with these headphones, which feature hi-fi waterproof speakers and form-fitting silicone earpieces.



### SKB Cases Drypod

\$39.99 • [www.drypod.com](http://www.drypod.com)

Lab-certified as meeting the MIL-STD-810F military immersion test, the Drypod bundles a belt clip, armband, and lanyard.

## iWillTravel

Credit goes to NationalGeographic.com for these excellent iPod-travel ideas, including prepping for trips by listening to audio travel guides for your destinations. Amateur and pro travelers typically fill such guides with points of interest, hotel and restaurant recommendations, precautions, cultural tidbits, and more. Dig online a bit, and you'll also unearth audio language guides; downloadable maps for video and photo iPods; travel-oriented podcasts (including at iTunes); audio guided tours of specific national and international museums, landmarks, and historical sites; and more.

### iJourneys.com

\$14.95

If you're heading to Italy, France, or Spain, take along an audio walking guide from Emmy Award winner Elyse Weiner.



### Audible.com

various prices

Among its many audio books, Audible has guides for language instruction ("In-Flight Japanese"), travel ("San Francisco Tour"), and sidewalk tours ("Londonwalks").



### ipodsubwaymaps.com

free

Great for mass-transit travel in major international cities.



# Know How

## Use Two iPods On One Computer

There's an interesting phenomenon we've noticed lately: iPods tend to multiply. Whether it's because each member of a music-loving family has to have her own player on which to tote her tunes or because one iPod does not necessarily fit all lifestyles, it's becoming more common that multiple iPods need to play nice on just one computer.

The easiest way to keep everyone's music where it belongs is to create separate accounts for each iPod owner. This method allows each person to sync to her own music library, which is very important if mom prefers Green Day while her daughter is still into Raffi. On a PC with Windows XP, create a new account with the User Accounts control panel. On Mac OS X go to System Preferences and under System, select Accounts; then click the plus sign (+) to create a new account. Now users can log in, launch iTunes, and start creating and syncing to their own libraries.

Even with separate accounts, users can pull music into their libraries from a shared music folder, saving disc space that might otherwise be wasted when more than one person copies the same music to the hard drive. To do this in WinXP, each user should copy her iTunes Music folder from its default location in iTunes to the shared music folder in Documents (in All Users).

In iTunes, select the shared directory as the iTunes Music folder location. Make



sure to check the Copy File To iTunes Music Folder When Adding To Library box so that any new music you rip or purchase will be copied into this library and other accounts can access it. The process is similar in OS X: Copy each account's iTunes Music folder to Shared

folder and, in Advanced Preferences, select it as the new location in iTunes.

If you don't want to mess with creating separate accounts, or if all of the iPods belong to just one user who wants to feed them from the same library, you can choose to sync just certain playlists on each iPod. To do this, plug your iPod into the USB port and then select it in iTunes under Devices. Under the Music tab, choose the radio button that allows you to sync selected playlists and then choose which playlists you'd like to sync. Each iPod you plug in can have its own unique set of playlists that will automatically be updated. Follow this same process for movies, TV shows, podcasts, or photos that you'd like to sync. **PG**

BY KRISTINA SPENCER

Each iPod you plug in can have its own unique set of playlists that will automatically be updated.



## tips

### Find The Perfect Cell Phone

# 1

#### Keep It Simple

CE devices of all sorts are stuffed to the gills with a range of features. And although it's certainly impressive that, in addition to just making calls, a phone can take pictures, check email, play MP3s, and track its user via GPS, many of us only need a phone that lets us call our friends and families. Many cell phone carriers offer basic phones. They lack the bells and whistles of the latest and greatest on the market, but these barebones phones do the job for a fraction of the price—or sometimes free.

# 2

#### Mull Your Options

It's good to have choices, but with so many phones on the market, selecting a provider and then a phone from that specific company can be a bit of a chore. Many electronics stores, including Best Buy, carry phones from a number of providers. Set aside some time to browse the aisles and compare features. See how the phone feels in your hand and whether the buttons are the right size for your fingers. Because many carriers allow users to upgrade their phones only every couple of years or so, you'll want to make sure the phone is a good fit.

# 3

#### Pull A Switcheroo

Many carriers have some sort of grace period—if you find that the phone you bought just isn't working for you, exchange it. Your perception is your reality: Even if you read scores of positive reviews and receive good recommendations from friends, you may find that your geographic location or even the number of callers using a network at the same time can affect your experience. Perhaps the phone doesn't live up to battery life claims or lacks sufficient volume. When you sign your contract, make sure to note to the length of the grace period, so you don't end up with a phone that drives you batty.

# 4

#### Pick The Proper Plan

No matter how wonderful the actual phone you opt for is, you may soon grow to despise it if the plan attached to it leaves something to be desired. Check out the fine print of the contract before you sign. If you foresee sending pictures or text messages, find out whether those services are included or if extra fees are involved. Make sure the plan covers areas to which you frequently travel. Another issue to consider, especially if you use your phone a lot, is that of roll-over minutes and whether you get to keep them from month to month.

# 5

#### Phones For Frequent Fliers

The world isn't as big as it once was. Once somewhat of a rarity, international travel is now quite common, both for business and pleasure. And because we're all used to the convenience of carrying a cell phone while we're home, many of us like to have access to a cell phone while we're abroad, too. If you travel with any degree of regularity, look for a phone that will work in the countries you frequent and be sure that whatever service plan you sign covers calls to and from foreign countries, as well.



BY SALLY MAREK CURRAN

# Cell Phone Providers

## Compare Plans To Find The Best Deal

**M**obile phone carrier branches don't invoke the sort of dread in customers that dentists do, but we still haven't met anyone who was enthusiastic about taking a trip to one of these mini stores. If memories of your last mobile phone purchase include standing in a crowded store while waiting for one of two sales representatives, it's time to change your phone shopping strategy: It's time to check out Best Buy.

The electronics retailer earns points for having more employees (and much more space) than the phone service branches, but Best Buy's real claim to fame is that it offers choice. Instead of sticking to one service, Best Buy offers plans from Amp'd Mobile, Cingular (The New AT&T), Sprint, and Verizon Wireless, which means you can compare service plans while you're comparing phones.

Best Buy also lets customers shop for plans and phones online. Although you can't speak to a Best Buy representative face to face, you'll find that the Web site has its own comparison perks. Once you enter your ZIP code, Best Buy's Web site creates a chart that lists available plans from all of the services. The chart features pricing, contract length, and plan details. **FG**

BY JOSHUA GULICK



**Phones.** You'll find phones from the most popular manufacturers, including Palm (which makes the Treo Smartphone), LG, Motorola, Nokia, and Samsung.

**Plans.** As with the other services, many Verizon Wireless plans include unlimited night and weekend minutes. If you're looking for the basic individual plan, you'll want the America's Choice 450, which has free weekend calls and 450 anytime minutes for \$39.99 per month. The America's Choice Family SharePlans start at \$69.99 per month for 700 anytime minutes.



**Phones.** Whether you're interested in a phone that has PDA capabilities, such as a RIM BlackBerry or Palm Treo, or you prefer a smaller phone, Sprint PCS has several options for you. Sprint also supports LG, Motorola, Samsung, and Sanyo, among others.

**Plans.** With its \$29.99 Basic Plan, Sprint PCS offers one of the least expensive individual plans around. The plan isn't half bad, either, as it supplements 200 anytime minutes with unlimited night and weekend minutes. Sprint Power Pack Family plans start at \$59.99 for 550 anytime minutes and includes unlimited night and weekend minutes.



**Phones.** Amp'd doesn't support a huge selection of phones, but if you've been eyeing that snazzy new Motorola RAZR V3m Red, know that Amp'd supports it and offers a few of its own. Be sure to consider the Mobile Angel, Mobile Hollywood, and Mobile Jet, all three of which include digital cameras and MP3 players.

**Plans.** The Amp'd End The Boredom individual plan features unlimited text messaging and 1,000 anytime minutes, which makes for a nice package at \$49.99 per month. Amp'd also offers share plans (which require contracts) and hybrid plans that run month-to-month. Plan prices range from \$30 at the low end to \$150; the high-end plans include video messaging and Amp'd Live video channels.



**Phones.** Cingular, The New AT&T, plans to support a wide array of phones, including Motorola's popular RAZR and SLVR phones. Best Buy also carries phones by LG, Nokia, Samsung, and other manufacturers to Cingular subscribers. The Sony Ericsson W810i Deluxe Walkman boasts Bluetooth, a camera, FM radio, and an MP3 player.

**Plans.** Cingular's individual packages range from the Nation 450 plan (\$39.99 per month), which includes 450 anytime minutes, to the Nation 6000 plan (\$199.99 per month). Family plans, which include two phone lines and let users add lines (for a fee), range from the Nation FamilyTalk 550 (\$59.99) with 550 anytime minutes to the Nation FamilyTalk 6000 (\$299.99). Many plans offer unlimited night and weekend minutes.



wireless

# Kids & Technology

## Electronic Dictionaries Boost Word Power

**M**ark Twain supposedly once said that “the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”

Developing writers can learn the differences between words with the help of a

dictionary. They also rely on the dictionary as *the* spelling authority.

It's typically not possible for kids to further burden their backpacks and haul around an unabridged or collegiate dictionary. Franklin Electronic Publishers ([www.franklin.com](http://www.franklin.com)) features a number of compact electronic dictionaries for anyone, from elementary students up

through college and beyond, who wants to sharpen his or her linguistic skills.

### Talking Dictionary For Kids

One of Franklin's premier products for kids is the Children's Talking Dictionary & Spell Corrector (\$59.95). This product is designed to help kids ages six to 10 in several ways.

*Tip*

### Make Study Time Part Of Family Time

Once a week, gather the family together for family night. Turn off the television and the game console, have your kids pull their MP3 players' earbuds out of their ears, and sit down together and play a game. You can even use the Franklin Children's Talking Dictionary & Spell Corrector as a starting point. Choose words at random and quiz your kids on the spelling and definition. When Mom and Dad are playing, too, the kids won't even realize they're learning. The Oregon Scientific SmartGlobe (\$149.99; [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)) has multiplayer games to make learning the geography, languages, cultures, and even time zones of the world a fun, interactive family activity.

Franklin Children's Talking Dictionary  
& Spell Corrector  
\$59.95 • [www.franklin.com](http://www.franklin.com)



Kids can build their vocabularies with the dictionary's succinct, easy-to-understand definitions of about 44,000 words. For instance, the definition of "curious" is "full of wonder." In addition, kids can create their own lists—say, this week's spelling words—for focused learning.

The dictionary also features a phonetic spelling corrector. If a child misspells a word, such as "komputor," the dictionary will display the correct spelling: computer.

Spelling a word correctly is one task kids have to master; pronouncing it correctly is another. Kids can learn how to correctly pronounce words because this dictionary talks to them. They can read a word and its meaning on the screen, and then they'll hear the dictionary pronounce the word and say its meaning. This gives a child the opportunity to hear, read, and repeat a word as many times as necessary in order to feel comfortable with its pronunciation, spelling, and meaning.

Another component of learning how to write is the actual physical creation of the words. Penmanship may seem a distant memory to adults who've spent decades at the keyboard, but learning the proper techniques for holding a pencil and forming letters is still an essential part of education for kids. The dictionary contains an animated tool that shows how to properly print and write letters in cursive.

The Children's Talking Dictionary has a few features kids are sure to find fun, such as the rhyme finder, word-building games, and the homophone guide, which teaches kids the difference between same-sounding words ("bear" and "bare") with different meanings.

The Children's Talking Dictionary runs on four AAA batteries (not included) and can work with headphones, which are sold separately (see the "Practical Accessories" sidebar).

## Comprehensive Dictionaries For Teens

A quality dictionary for teens (and adults) provides more than words and definitions. It also includes helpful extras, such as an abbreviation list or punctuation guide. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary & Thesaurus with Comprehensive Reference Set (\$59.95) is designed for students who need those extras.

The dictionary holds more than 300,000 definitions, and the thesaurus features more than half a million synonyms and antonyms. Like the children's dictionary, this one will correct words that a user enters incorrectly. However, it also gives multiple definitions and parts of speech for each word.

Along with the traditional word dictionary, this device includes the Merriam-Webster Geographical Dictionary and the Merriam-Webster Biographical Dictionary. Use the former to learn about cities and countries, including their physical features, and use the latter to access facts about famous or influential people.

Other features include a Grammar Guide, Five-Language Translator (to and from English, Spanish, French, German, and Italian), SAT word list, games, and Crossword Puzzle Solver.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary & Thesaurus with Comprehensive Reference Set requires two CR-2032 batteries, which are included. It doesn't have a speaking feature, but the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition (\$119.95) does.

The 11th edition, which runs on two AAA batteries (included), contains definitions for more than 200,000 words and half a million synonyms. ClariSpeech technology provides spoken pronunciations and definitions, and the dictionary gives the correct spellings for words a user enters incorrectly. The Grammar

## Practical Accessories

**A** talking dictionary offers many benefits to kids, but it admittedly has one drawback for Mom and Dad: We don't need to hear the definitions over and over. So, Franklin sells some practical accessories for its products that are sure to please kids and parents alike.

Snap up a set of headphones (\$9.95; [www.franklin.com](http://www.franklin.com)) for the talking dictionary, giving your child the freedom to privately access the spoken feature—even in public places. You'll also find protective carrying cases for \$14.95 and up.

Because the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition, has an expansion slot, you can supplement the content of this device with Franklin's expansion cards (\$9.95 and up). These handy and portable cards cover a range of topics, including foreign-language dictionaries; encyclopedias; health, history, and wine guides; word, card, and sports games; and different translations of the Bible. ●

Guide and games boost word and syntax power, and the built-in ROLODEX Database and card slot, plus the USB Download Kit (\$19.95, not included), can greatly expand this dictionary's functions.

## Harness The Power

Nothing can take the necessary place that a dictionary has in a student's life for developing a rich vocabulary. An electronic version of this educational essential can complement his quest to harness the power of lightning in his writing instead of settling for the weak emission of a lightning bug. **FC**

BY RACHEL DEROWITSCH



# Yes, There Are Other MP3 Players

## The List Is Surprisingly Long



Although we haven't recently asked around, we're pretty sure we'd be hard pressed to find anyone who has never heard of an iPod; they're everywhere. Because of how pervasive iPods are, it's easy to forget there are other MP3 players out there.

Next time you're in your local Best Buy, walk through the Wireless department and look at all of the MP3 players in their various shapes, sizes, colors, and capacities. Some have FM tuners, some can share music with each other wirelessly, and others have their own built-in speaker systems so you can dispense with headphones and docking stations.

One other thing most of the non-iPod MP3 players have is PlaysForSure compatibility, which means you can download your music from sources other than iTunes. Here are just three of the many players you'll likely encounter. **FC**

BY KATHRYN DOLAN



### Creative Zen Vision:M

**\$249.99 • [www.creative.com](http://www.creative.com)**

Available in black, white, green, pink, and blue, the Creative Zen Vision:M holds 30GB of songs (roughly 7,500). You can listen to the PlaysForSure songs you download for 14 hours per charge, or you can watch about 4 hours of movies. With the built-in FM tuner, you're never far from news, weather, or your favorite local radio station, either. The Zen Vision:M's personal organizer, which has a to-do list, a contact list, and a calendar, syncs with Microsoft Outlook, and you can record reminders to yourself on the integrated voice recorder. The device hooks up easily to a PC with the included USB 2.0 cable.



### Samsung YP-K5

**\$229.99 (4GB) • [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)**

You can use the YP-K5's headphones to enjoy about 30 hours of music (PlaysForSure downloads or radio via the FM receiver) or flip open the speaker to share your tunes for about six hours. The integrated rechargeable lithium-polymer battery also powers the clock and its alarm; take advantage of the auto-off function to listen to music as you fall asleep and press the snooze button for a few more winks in the morning. There's a 2GB version of the YP-K5 for \$179.99, and both versions of the flash-memory devices support USB 2.0 for speedy music transfer rates.



### SanDisk Sansa m240

**\$69.99 (1GB) • [www.sandisk.com](http://www.sandisk.com)**

This tiny, lightweight flash-memory device holds about 16 hours of PlaysForSure MP3s. When the single AAA battery runs out (usually after about 19 hours of playback), pop in a fresh battery. The FM tuner supports 20 presets, and you can also record brief messages to yourself using the built-in microphone and voice recorder. The Sansa m240 comes with a USB 2.0 cable (and is backward-compatible with USB 1.1), a protective case, and an armband so you can listen hands-free as you exercise. Available in white, the unit comes in a variety of capacities: 512MB (\$49.99), 2GB (\$99.99), and 4GB (\$199.99).

# MP3 Player Glossary

**W**ho doesn't want an MP3 player? It can help you relax, provide motivation, and keep you up-to-date on news. When you head to your local Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)) to snag one, make sure you have this glossary so you can pick the perfect model.

**AAC**—Short for Advanced Audio Coding, it is a competitor to the more popular MP3 file format.

**Click Wheel**—Apple's proprietary circular control on the front of the iPod.

**download**—In terms of digital music, downloading happens when you receive a song to your computer through an Internet or other network connection. You'll download songs from music service Web sites such as iTunes, Napster, or Rhapsody.

**DRM**—Digital Rights Management is a security mechanism for digital media. A common DRM scheme for digital music involves getting a license file to authorize playback of a free or purchased song.

**earbuds**—Small, circular devices you put into your ears that serve the same function as headphones. MP3 players come with their own earbuds, but you can, of course, purchase a separate pair that are more comfortable or of better quality.

**flash memory**—Solid-state memory with no moving parts that is lightweight and small. In terms of MP3 players, a flash-based player is lighter and smaller than a hard drive-based player, and it also won't skip. Thus, they are popular for use during exercising. However, the capacity of a flash drive isn't as large as a hard drive.

**FM tuner**—In MP3 players, a built-in FM tuner lets you listen to local radio.

**hard drive**—Storage in which rigid platters are inside a fixed casing. In terms of MP3 players, a hard drive-based player is heavier and larger than a flash-based player. Because of the moving parts (the platters), hard drive-based players are also prone to skipping. However, the capacities are much larger than flash drive capacities.

**iTunes**—A digital media player application that loads onto your computer that lets you play, organize, and download and purchase music, videos,

podcasts, and television shows for an iPod or computer.

**MP3**—Perhaps the most popular digital audio encoding format. It compresses audio to about one-twelfth the original size while still providing excellent sound. In general, a 1MB MP3 file will last about one minute.

**playlist**—A queue of songs a user creates to play on a computer, burn to a CD, or transfer to a digital audio player. The playlist only includes directions to the location of the songs, not the songs themselves.

**PlaysForSure**—A popular Microsoft certification that ensures portable devices, such as MP3 players, and media, such as digital music and videos, are compatible with each other.

**podcast**—A downloadable episode that is similar to a radio program. A user can subscribe to a podcast for updated episodes, or she can download podcasts one at a time. A podcast is usually available in MP3 format.

**screen**—The display on the front of the MP3 player. A player's screen can either be color or black and white.

**WMA**—Windows Media Audio, a digital audio format created by Microsoft to compete with the MP3 format. WMA files are smaller than MP3 files.

**widescreen**—A screen with a 16:9 aspect ratio. In terms of music players, the Microsoft Zune and the Creative Zen Vision W are two that have wide screens.



## Which MP3 Player Is Best For You?

Pods are cool, sure, but you have other choices when it comes to listening to your tunes. This chart compares the most important—and coolest—features from select MP3 players available at Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)).



		Hard Drive		
What It Is	What It Means	Apple iPod	Creative Zen Vision W	Creative Zen Vision: M
<b>Memory type</b>	Flash (no moving parts, lightweight, perfect for exercising) or hard drive (moving parts, more capacity)	Hard drive	Hard drive	Hard drive
<b>Capacities</b>	How much memory the player has (on models available at Best Buy)	30GB, 80GB	30GB	30GB
<b>Songs</b>	How many songs the player can hold	7,500; 20,000 (based on 4 minutes per song at 128Kbps AAC)	7,500 (based on 4 minutes per song at 128Kbps WMA)	7,500 (based on 4 minutes per song at 128Kbps WMA)
<b>Video capability</b>	Some MP3 players can play video, as well as music	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Colors</b>	Several players offer a variety of color choices	Black, white	Black	Black, white, blue, pink, green
<b>FM tuner</b>	Lets you listen to radio stations	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Music services supported</b>	Not all MP3 players can play songs from all music services	iTunes	AOL Music Now, Yahoo! Music, Napster, Soundbuzz, Audible.com	AOL Music Now, Yahoo! Music, Napster, Soundbuzz, Audible.com
<b>Battery life</b>	How long the battery will last when playing music	14 hours; 20 hours	13 hours	14 hours
<b>Perfect for</b>		Those interested in a storage device as much as a music player	Portable video buffs	Users who like to get their music from a variety of sources
<b>Coolest feature</b>		It's an iPod: Need we say more?	Widescreen (16:9) LCD	Included Personal Organizer software
<b>Best Buy price</b>		\$249.99; \$349.99	\$299.99	\$249.99



Apple iPod



Creative Zen Vision W



Creative Zen Vision: M



Microsoft Zune

## Flash

	Microsoft Zune	Apple iPod nano	SanDisk Sansa e280R	Samsung YP-T9JAB	Samsung YP-K5JAB
	Hard drive	Flash	Flash	Flash	Flash
	30GB	2GB, 4GB, 8GB	8GB	4GB	4GB
	7,500 (based on 4 minutes per song at 128Kbps WMA)	500; 1,000; 2,000 (based on 4 minutes per song at 128Kbps AAC)	2,000 (based on 4 minute songs at 128Kbps WMA)	1,000 (based on 4 minute songs at 128Kbps WMA)	1,000 (based on 4 minute songs at 128Kbps WMA)
	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
	Black, white, brown	Black, silver, pink, blue, green	Black	Black	Black
	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Zune Marketplace	iTunes	Best Buy Digital Music Store; Napster; Rhapsody	Best Buy Digital Music Store; Rhapsody	Best Buy Digital Music Store; Rhapsody
	14 hours	24 hours	20 hours	30 hours	30 hours
	Users who enjoy sharing and who might be hard on their device	Joggers; iPod lovers who aren't interested in carrying their entire library with them	Folks who want more features, such as video and an FM tuner, than an iPod nano	Budget-conscious music lovers; kids	Users who find ear-buds uncomfortable
	Wi-Fi lets you share music with other Zune users	Diminutive size	MicroSD expansion slot for more memory	Photo-organization tools	Built-in speaker system
	\$249.99	\$149.99; \$199.99; \$249.99	\$249.99	\$179.99	\$229.99



Apple iPod nano



SanDisk Sansa e280R



Samsung YP-T9JAB



Samsung YP-K5JAB



exit

### Sony MiniDV Handycam Camcorder

Small enough to take everywhere; easy enough to record everything.

\$249.99



### Crane Adorable Humidifiers

A fun way to take the sniffles away.

\$29.99



### Hasbro i-Fish

Colors, music, and movement—what more could Baby want?

\$34.99



### Digital Scrapbooking Software

Remember these days for the rest of your days.

\$79.95



### Digital Thermometer

When you have to check a tiny, moving target.

\$12.99



### Rapid Beverage Chiller

Warms bottles and chills wine.

\$89.99



### Mini Food Processor

Perfect little portions for your perfect little person.

\$17.99



### Neck & Shoulder Massager

Happy mom = happy everyone else.

\$24.99



## Best Buy Baby

If you or someone you know is a new parent, Best Buy offers several baby must-haves that you can pick up when you go in for a gorgeous, sleek plasma, a robust new family PC, or a rockin' stereo system. You can find these products online, as well, at [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com).

# The Ultimate Cinema Experience



- 1920x1080 High resolution HDTV with ATSC/NTSC/ClearQAM tuner
- 1080Pure™ - offering 1080p resolution for all HD inputs
- Supports all TV/Video formats (1080p, 1080i, 720p, 480p, 480i)
- Multiple HD input connectors including 4 HDMI™
- Contrast Ratio 5000:1- Dynamic
- Preset and custom video modes for exceptional viewing experience

## Introducing the Westinghouse TX-47F430S,

a sleek 47-inch LCD TV with 1080p resolution, which is the highest definition available today. This cinema-quality display includes a built-in HD tuner and would work perfectly in your media room or large bedroom. Also check out Westinghouse's other LCD products, all available at Best Buy and [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com), including other gorgeous LCD HDTVs, streamlined LCD monitors, and easy-to-use digital photo frames.



**Westinghouse**





# The Monaco

The perfect blend of fashion and function.

The new Monaco notebook bag from Mobile Edge is the perfect blend of contemporary styling and real-world functionality.

The elegant quilted MicroFiber exterior and rich poly-suede interior give the Monaco the look and feel of a designer handbag. This designer styling is combined with a functional interior layout that features individual sections for files, accessories, cables, magazines plus a separate padded computer compartment to securely cradle your notebook.

The Monaco also features our exclusive Wireless Security Shield™ pocket that will insulate your cell phone or PDA from malicious hackers, viruses and spam. A coordinated detachable exterior cell phone pouch provides quick access to your phone. Finally, you'll find a handy removable matching wallet, just the right size for your personal items.



Dedicated Computer Compartment



Buttery-soft Poly-Suede Interior with Multiple Pockets



Matching Detachable Cell Phone Pocket



Matching Removable Cosmetics Wallet

Laptop Backpacks / Briefcases /  
Messenger Bags / Totes

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